

Reagan's  
moment  
of truth

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# IN THESE TIMES

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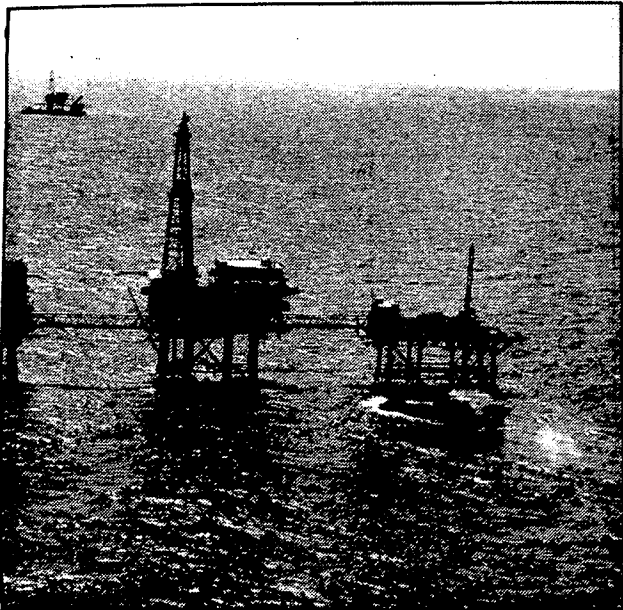
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# Debating an oil import fee



By David Moberg

One idea that's struck sparks in both Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns this year is the proposal to impose an oil import fee. In New Hampshire Rep. Jack Kemp blasted Sen. Robert Dole and Vice President George Bush for favoring such a fee (Bush insisted he didn't, despite many reports he'd lobbied for it within the Reagan administration). And in Democratic debates Gov. Michael Dukakis, the only stalwart Democratic critic of the import fee, regularly spars on the plan with Rep. Richard Gephardt and former Sen. Gary Hart, its two most aggressive Democratic advocates.

There's obviously no clear party or liberal/conservative division on the issue, and even the oil industry is not monolithic: independent drillers and major oil companies without huge foreign reserves or offshore refining capacity tend to favor it; while some multinationals and domestic refiners who import crude oil oppose it. It attracts supporters with varied motives, but among candidates the search for dollars and votes in the "oil patch" ranks high. With the campaign moving into states that produce little and consume much oil, however, the political tables may be turned.

The import fee would create a gusher of profit for domestic producers but otherwise cost consumers and hurt the economy. And its putative benefits could better be achieved in other ways.

Most proposals call for a \$5 or \$10 per barrel fee on imported oil that now sells for around \$18 a barrel, plus something similar or higher on refined products. That

would mean domestic producers could raise the price of all their oil and most likely drill or operate wells that yield oil that is currently unprofitable to pump. Ostensibly the fee would reduce U.S. dependence on imported oil and reduce vulnerability from disruptions of supply. It would also rekindle the smoldering Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana economies.

**A flabby argument:** But the assumptions behind the argument are often wrong, alternatives given little attention and the side effects ignored. Hart argues that he wants the fee to prevent sending his son (read "your son") to fight in the Persian Gulf, a noble motive. But the U.S. imported only 27 percent of its oil in 1985, compared to 47 percent at the peak in 1977. During the same time OPEC Arab countries' share of U.S. oil imports dropped from 35 percent to 9 percent, although over the past two years imports from Saudi Arabia have risen sharply. U.S. imports are geographically dispersed, but the top three in 1986, with around 12 percent each of total U.S. imports, were Canada, Venezuela and Mexico.

The U.S. isn't in the Persian Gulf now—and wouldn't be sending Hart's son—to protect its own oil supplies. And even if the U.S. got no imports from the politically volatile Mideast, it would not be spared price shocks from a major oil disruption: prices would rise everywhere in the world unless strict controls were imposed. In any case, the International Energy Agency has plans for sharing scarce oil in case of a disruption, and the U.S. already is steadily, if too slowly, building up its Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a federal storage of oil originated under President Carter to cushion future oil shocks.

Oil dependence, to be distinguished from "vulnerability," is another story. In response to the oil shocks of the '70s, annual U.S. oil consumption has dropped 9 percent, even though the country still depends on oil for 43 percent of its total energy—almost entirely for cars, trucks and airplanes. This dependence can be further reduced by improving energy efficiency. That could be achieved by using more—and more efficient—railroads and mass transit, by increasing mandated efficiency standards for autos, or by enacting a "gas guzzler" tax or bounties to get rid of inefficient old junkers.

**Investing for efficiency:** Or the government could encourage development of alternative fuels. There are already proposals—pending at the federal level and enacted in some states—to increase the use of both methanol and ethanol alcohols. Such alternatives now can only compete with subsidies that somebody must pay (for example, exempting ethanol from taxes cut from the highway trust fund). But some subsidies may be justified not only for their contribution to future reliance on more diverse and renewable energy supplies but also for their environmental benefits of reducing smog. In the long term, new technologies may not only reduce oil dependence but create new products with domestic and export markets, such as efficient fuel cells that can power autos with a range of renewable fuels.

Direct investment in conservation, efficiency, new technologies and alternative fuels makes more sense as a way out of oil dependency than raising prices to stimulate production of domestic oil. It is unlikely that continued exploration and drilling in the U.S. will yield anything other than small finds and expensive oil. Ed Rothschild, assistant director of the Citizen/Labor Energy Coalition (C/LEC), estimates that the oil import fee would only stimulate production of a few hundred thousand barrels of oil a day, less than 3 percent of daily production. "The import fee is a 'drain-America-first' policy," he says. Why not rely for now on cheaper oil from other sources, making U.S. reserves last longer and thus providing more long-term security?

In any case, C/LEC recently calculated that a \$5 oil import fee would lead to a \$50 billion annual increase in U.S. energy costs; (they assume natural gas prices would follow oil prices upward). That would cost the average household about \$200 a year, roughly a 13 percent increase in gasoline and heating costs, the group argued in a letter to the candidates.

Although cutting oil imports would reduce the trade

deficit, the oil import fee would raise the cost of production and possibly reduce exports of U.S. manufactured goods and agricultural commodities; lower energy costs have been one of the few breaks farmers have had in the past couple of years. So the trade benefits are muddled at best.

**Seductive revenue:** The oil import fee has been attractive to Gephardt, Hart and Sen. Paul Simon as a source of revenue to reduce the deficit—about \$8.1 billion a year for the \$5 fee. But there are many better, more progressive taxes. And even if one believed that it was necessary to raise fuel prices to encourage conservation, it would make more sense to raise gasoline taxes and avoid windfall oil profits—although a gasoline excise tax, like the import fee, would be regressive. In any case, C/LEC argues, the \$5 a barrel fee would lead to a 1 to 2 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index, a loss of 230,000 jobs nationwide and a \$15 to \$25 billion reduction in Gross National Product—and thus ultimately lower

## INSIDE STORY

federal income tax revenue and increase social welfare costs.

Since Mexico and some other poorer, heavily indebted countries are among major oil exporters to the U.S., the oil import fee would further crimp their economies—and make it harder for them to buy U.S. goods. When Dukakis made that argument in the Williamsburg, Va. debate, Gephardt made a cheap rejoinder, asking if Dukakis was running for president of the U.S. or Mexico.

Even Jesse Jackson has limply endorsed the fee as "a last resort" although he called for rebates to low-income consumers and Rust Belt manufacturers. But the main feature of his energy policy are a Pan-American Energy Security Alliance—linking the Western hemisphere through trade in oil and manufactured goods—and development of renewable energy.

Dukakis recently entered the bidding war for Texas dollars and votes with a proposal for a bonus to be paid for new oil produced for the Strategic Petroleum Reserve—a less offensive bailout for the drilling business. But otherwise all the Democratic candidates have reluctantly or enthusiastically embraced this special tax break, especially Mr. Tax Reform, Dick Gephardt. Simon claims to be a fighter for progressive taxation, yet he supports this basically regressive tax. Embraced by free-trader Hart, it is a clearly protectionist move, even more than the Gephardt trade amendment Hart vilifies. Al Gore, who wants the U.S. to fight in the Persian Gulf anyway, says he won't rule it out.

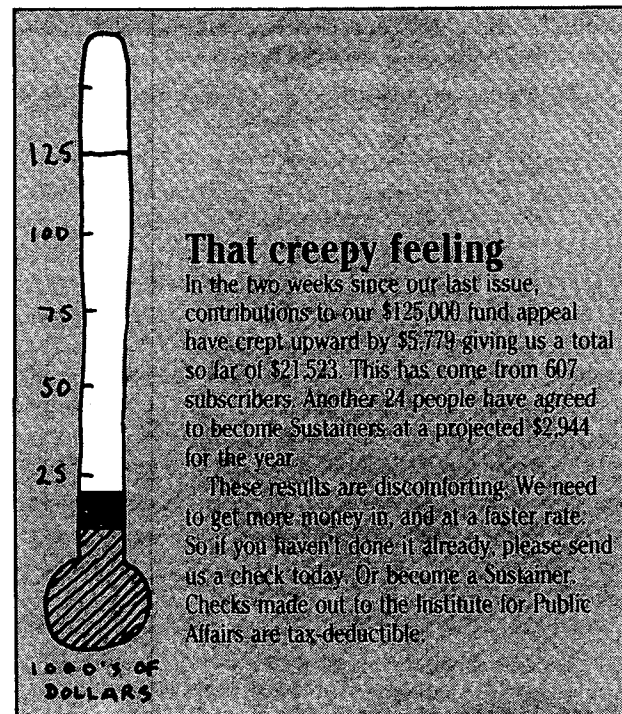
It isn't the first time oil has done weird things to Democrats. It is, as Hunter Thompson might say, not a pretty picture. □

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By Alan L. Gilchrist and  
Louise A. Halper

## Soviet compromise on Star Wars may reveal Reagan's nuclear aims

**W**HEN RONALD REAGAN BECAME PRESIDENT, he told Americans that his unprecedented military buildup would bring peace by bolstering the U.S. at the bargaining table. A position of strength, he likes to say, is the basis for negotiation. But many believe Reagan's aim is to end the arms control process and win nuclear superiority over the "Evil Empire." As a result of the most recent Soviet concession at the Washington summit, Reagan will be put to the test: is his ultimate goal victory over the Soviet Union or is it peace?

His approach to nuclear weapons has been to advocate the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) or Star Wars and arms reductions. But Star Wars could be used to shield an aggressor from retaliation. Reagan himself concedes this danger. "If paired with offensive systems, [Star Wars] can be viewed as fostering an aggressive policy," he said in 1983.

Deploying Star Wars at the same time strategic weapons are being reduced would be especially dangerous. Indeed, at Reykjavik, Mikhail Gorbachov told Reagan that "only a fool" would reduce strategic weapons while the other side is committed to deploying a space shield.

Why? Because if each superpower has fewer nuclear weapons, the one with a shield against retaliation might be tempted to launch a first strike at a reduced number of targets from behind its shield. The acknowledged American lead in advanced technology could give the U.S. that option. In fact, if advanced testing and development of Star Wars components proceeds successfully, a realistic theory for nuclear weapon use will exist for the first time since 1949.

**The first-strike threat:** This isn't a question of whether the U.S. *intends* to launch a first strike. Treaties are not based on the parties' stated intentions. Just as every nuclear missile is presumed to carry the maximum number of warheads for which it has been tested, a weapons system is judged by its capability, not the intention of its creators. By the same token, even though most experts give Star Wars a slim chance of success, the Soviets have to negotiate as though it were sure to work. If Star Wars could threaten a first strike, the Soviets must assume the threat is real.

Obviously, no superpower can tolerate that hazard. Former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger predicted, "The natural response of either of the superpower competitors to the deployment of defenses will be to expand offensive forces." When Gorbachov said during his Washington press conference that the Soviet response to Star Wars deployment would be "asymmetrical" and "100 times cheaper," Schlesinger's prescience was confirmed.

With Gorbachov unable to reduce arms if Star Wars is deployed and Reagan adamant on Star Wars, how can an arms reduction treaty be negotiated? The middle ground between the two positions may have been found last fall in the administration's negotiations with leading Senate arms control specialist Sam Nunn (D-GA). In order to get the military budget through Congress, the administration agreed to bar Star Wars testing for a year, and to forego any attempt at early deployment of a Star Wars system dur-

ing Reagan's presidency.

Earlier in Reagan's second term, the administration, with then-Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger leading the charge, had argued that the ABM treaty does not bar space testing and development of defensive systems. But Nunn and most of his Senate

### ARMS CONTROL

colleagues, as well as the treaty's negotiators on both sides, maintained that ABM prohibits such testing. There was no agreement on whose interpretation was correct. But the administration's concessions to Nunn meant that, for the rest of Reagan's presidency, no action would be taken by the U.S. inconsistent with the Senate and the Soviet Union's traditional understanding of the signators' obligations under ABM.

Building on that compromise, the Soviets dropped their demand that Reagan give up Star Wars as a plan for the future. They signalled the concession by repeated assertions before the Washington summit that Star Wars is not an impediment to a Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and that the ultimate decision whether to build it lies with the U.S.

This means that arms reductions do not have to await a final resolution of the Star Wars issue. Instead Gorbachov will take a seven-to-10-year guarantee that the U.S. will continue to adhere to the ABM treaty, prohibiting advanced Star Wars testing and development.

How does this fit into the arms reduction treaty the superpowers could make? The plan worked out at Reykjavik remains the framework: 50 percent of offensive missiles are to be cut within a specified period; at its close, a negotiated plan for reduction to zero offensive missiles is to go into effect. If both reductions actually take place, no strategic, or superpower-to-superpower, nuclear capability will exist by the year 2000.

That plan satisfied Reagan's oft-stated ambition to reduce nuclear weapons, not merely limit their rate of increase. But by reducing the number of targets, it could leave the Soviet Union vulnerable to a first strike if the U.S. builds Star Wars. So in the interest of their national security, the Soviets must, at a bare minimum, ensure that Star Wars is not ready to be deployed in the first, and most dangerous, period of reductions. Gorbachov's new concession achieves this minimum goal. As long as Star Wars is not developed during the first step of reductions, nor tested so that it can be deployed immediately after, he will not insist that the U.S. renounce its right to build Star Wars in the future.

**Something for everyone:** The proposal is a genuine attempt at compromise. Indeed, it is the maximum concession that the Soviets can make without conceding, as no superpower ever would, a destabilizing advantage to its adversary.

Gorbachov does not get the ban on Star Wars that the Soviets have sought since the day after it was proposed, but he does get



a period of time during which the U.S. may change its mind about the need for Star Wars. Reagan must leave to the future the Star Wars question, but he gets the 50 percent reductions in offensive arms that would make Star Wars more effective.

In making his concession, Gorbachov has, in effect, taken Reagan at his word. Star Wars, Reagan says, is not a threat to the Soviets, not an attempt to gain a strategic advantage over an adversary, not a plan to allow one side to dictate political terms to the other under the threat of a deterrent-proof nuclear first strike.

The Soviets are saying to Reagan: If that is so, and you will not abandon Star Wars, at least give us the time to develop it at the same pace as you, to gain the knowledge that you claim you plan to share with us in the future. What you give up is no more than what you claim not to seek—that is, the attempt to gain a destabilizing edge.

Both sides agree a treaty would also require "intensive discussions of strategic stability" for three years before the ABM adherence period ends. If either side then wishes

**If you will not give up  
Star Wars, say the  
Soviets, let us develop it  
at the same pace as you.  
All you give up is what  
you claim not to seek—  
the attempt to gain a  
destabilizing edge.**

to withdraw from ABM, it may do so if withdrawal is in "its supreme interest" and six months' advance notice is given. Withdrawal from ABM then would signal the intention to proceed with Star Wars, dooming the next round of cuts in nuclear weapons. Missile forces that had been cut in the first 50 percent round would probably be rebuilt.

But the Soviets believe that a new arms race in space is not the inevitable outcome of their proposal. In seven to 10 years, a period of supervised reductions of long-range weapons will be completed. A new

president may have established a cooperative relationship with Gorbachov, while Americans will have had a chance to judge the success of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

Then the choice may be easy: further missile cuts with adherence to ABM or a trillion-dollar outlay for a new arms race in space. The end of Star Wars could come through a mutual, but independent, decision of both superpowers.

And what if Reagan does not accept this proposal? The first and most obvious possibility is that the same deal will be offered to the next president, who is unlikely to be as committed to Star Wars as Reagan is. On the other hand, the new president will not have been personally involved in negotiations and is less likely to carry the right-wing clout that Reagan does. Clearly, the Soviets would prefer to have Reagan's imprimatur on such an agreement.

**If the treaty is rejected?** In that case, there will be no reduction in arms, but in fact an increase, as the Soviets seek to counter the space shield's first-strike capability by maximizing targets. The offensive force limitations of SALT II, already violated by the U.S. in 1987, would be breached by the Soviets as well and become a dead letter. At the same time, the Soviets would no doubt proceed with their own space shield program. In the U.S., Star Wars testing in space would breach the ABM treaty.

The structure of arms control, so painstakingly and painfully created over the post-war period, would crumble. It is a bleak outlook but, we would then have to conclude, the natural outcome of Reagan's refusal to give up the search for victory over the Soviet Union.

In December Reagan took a giant step in the opposite direction when he signed the INF agreement. At the Washington summit, he looked every inch the peacemaker, calling off the Cold War for a week of unparalleled euphoria about Soviet-American relations. But events are moving fast, and in Moscow this summer the Soviets will force an even more fundamental decision on him, one that will finally reveal the intention of Reagan's military buildup.

If his aim has really been to negotiate from a position of strength, he has extracted every major concession possible and can reap the fruits of his efforts, entrusting the fate of Star Wars to his successors. Then, whatever else history has to say about him, Reagan will be remembered as the hard-nosed negotiator who finally broke the spiral of the arms race. If, on the other hand, he refuses the period of ABM adherence that is the single concession asked of him, Americans and history will know that his objective has not been to make peace, but to destabilize the nuclear balance, rendering the world vastly more dangerous for those who outlive him. □

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By Joel Bleifuss

## Nearer My God to Thee

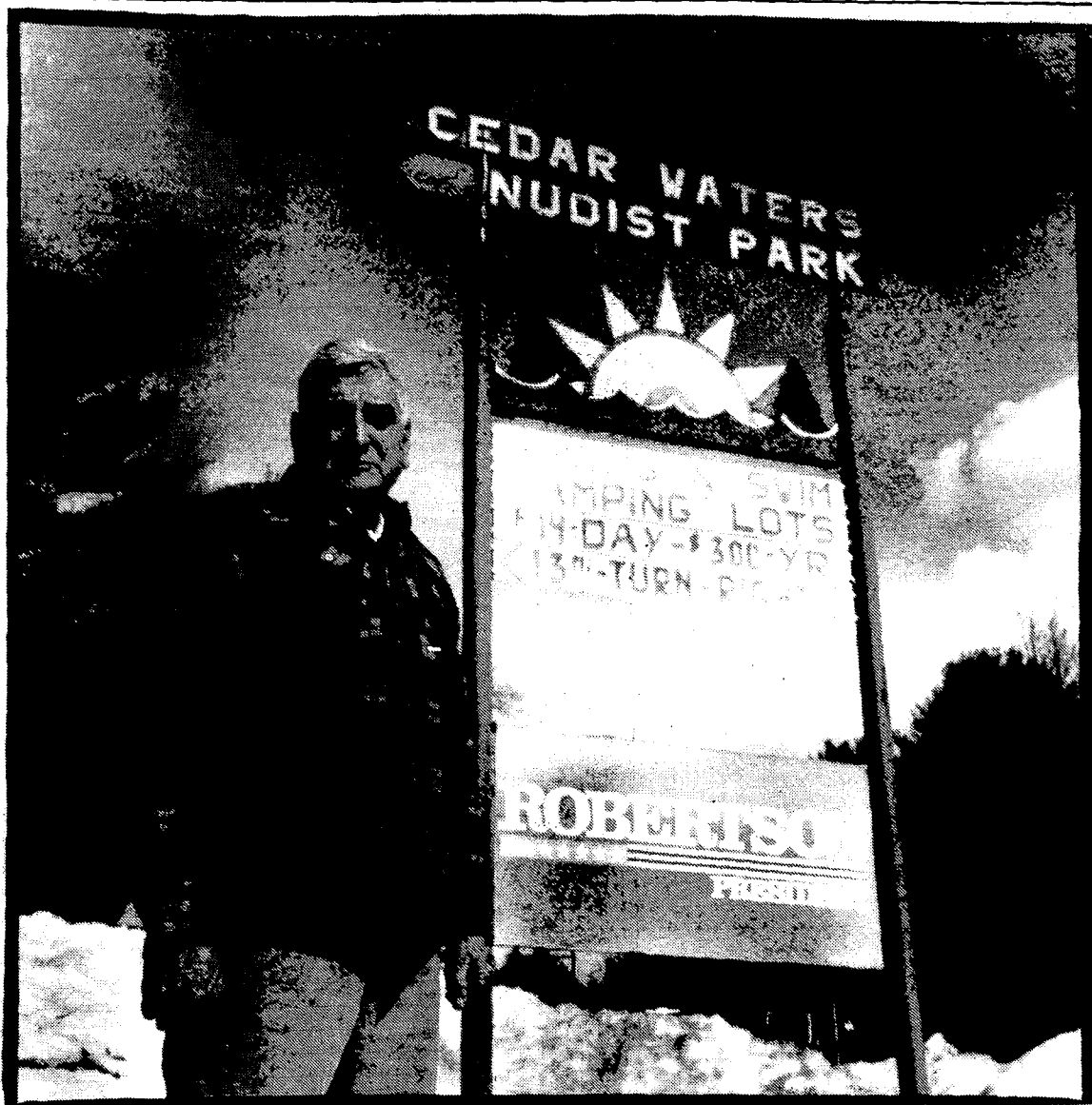
As presidential contender Pat Robertson says, "Unless we have moral and religious people exercising their rights as citizens, those rights will be exercised by the immoral and irreligious." Evangelist Dave Balsiger of Costa Mesa, Calif., has taken these words to heart and begun to counter the sinful influence of the immoral people Robertson further describes as the "tiny 6 percent minority who don't believe in anything." Balsiger publishes the *Presidential Biblical Scoreboard*, a 40-page guide that rates the candidates' stands on "biblical-family-moral-freedom issues." Not surprisingly Pat Robertson gets the top score with a 95 percent rating. The mark against him is that he plans to balance the budget by increasing taxes. But, praise the Lord, he only favors imposing "sin tax" user fees. The other candidates have blemished records. George Bush, 75 percent worthy, is the son of a "wealthy international banker" and stands "accused" of being a member of the "Eastern Establishment." (Bush at one time bragged of how he had only been born once.) Robert Dole, 60 percent away from the Devil, has problems. He is not ready to test everyone for AIDS. The *Scoreboard* also has doubts about his wife Elizabeth, noting that she is his second spouse. The guide implicates the former transportation secretary in problems air travelers face. As for the Democrats, all are zeros, or near zeros. Like Dole, a problem for candidates Simon, Gephardt, Gore and Dukakis is their wives. Jeanne, Jane, Tipper and Kitty all are members of Peace Links, "an advisory council of Soviet-controlled [front groups] or advocates for communist foreign-policy objectives." Last and least, in the guide's view, is the man who if elected would be the "first Marxist president of the U.S.," the only candidate who has received a "large grant" from the "Libyan government," Jesse Jackson. Not that the *Biblical Scoreboard* is partisan. Balsiger explained to *In These Times* that in his *Congressional Scoreboards* some Republicans have done very poorly. There was even a Jew who scored 100. As for the Democrats, one does catch Balsiger's eye. "If Sen. Sam Nunn were running he would probably have gotten a 75 in our scoreboard." Does anyone read the *Presidential Biblical Scoreboard*? Yes. Members of the thousands of fundamentalists churches have in recent weeks kept the four employees in the Scoreboard's warehouse working 15 hours per day fulfilling bulk orders.

## A horde of a different faith

The Christian right's Moslem equivalents, the Islamic fundamentalists, are busy making trouble in Egypt. According to Henri Tincq writing in Paris' *Le Monde*, Egyptian Christians are increasingly suffering persecution from the burgeoning army of Islamic fundamentalists. Coptic Christian bishops and Catholic nuns are being insulted on the street. At secular universities, Christian students are victimized. Classes taught by Christian professors are boycotted and conversations between male and female students are broken up by the bearded fundamentalists. In Minieh, an Upper Egypt city of Coptic origin, Moslem youths wielding bicycle chains stormed the headquarters of a coeducational Christian association and the local Jesuit school was fire-bombed. Not surprisingly Egypt's Copts are beginning to emigrate. Said Monsignor Antonious Nagib, the Catholic Coptic bishop of Egypt who lives in Minieh, "Anything can happen, but I firmly hope nothing does."

## A company you'll love to hate

INFACT, the Boston-based group that successfully targetted Nestle, (a company whose infant formula contributed to an increase in third world infant mortality) has set its sights on General Electric. The organization is calling for a consumer boycott of this maker of light bulbs, nuclear bombs, faulty nuclear reactors and NBC television broadcasts. Thanks to INFACT, GE now clearly stands out as one of the great corporate villains of our time. Late last month the group published a 133-page report, *INFACT Brings GE to Light—General Electric: Shaping Nuclear Weapons Policies for Profits*. A potential college textbook on how a giant corporation's greed has historically perverted public needs, the report is crammed with disturbing facts: • In 1984-86 U.S. taxpayers paid GE more than \$11 billion to build nuclear warfare systems. • Today GE pays three former Reagan advisers \$27,000 a year to sit on its board of directors. One of these is William French Smith, the president's current personal attorney and former U.S. attorney



New Hampshire nudist Bob Bonser puts his lot with Pat Robertson.

## Pat Robertson's support is broad and bared

Those who think Pat Robertson's "invisible army" is just a bunch of uptight prudes with a fetish for politics should join Robert Bonser some summer Sunday as he, his wife Mary, their two children and eight grandchildren stroll to church dressed in no more than God gave them.

Bob and Mary Bonser own and operate Cedar Waters Nudist Park in Nottingham, New Hampshire—"the largest nudist resort in New England"—in accordance with their evangelical beliefs. At Cedar Waters, up to 1,000 summer visitors are subject to Bonser's interpretation of God's dress code. In this Eden, rock-ribbed morality and unashamed nakedness go hand-in-hand.

"Nudism is not an unpardonable sin [that] couldn't be washed away by the blood of Jesus," Bonser says. Genial, gray and grizzled at 67, the World War II veteran has been letting the breeze blow through his legs, weather permitting, since 1950, when a doctor told him to "get some sun" to help an illness.

A full gun rack hangs on Bonser's office wall. Mentioning the Seabrook nuclear power plant brings his condemnation of "scum-of-the-earth" Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis who, Bonser says, will cause New Englanders to run out of electricity by shutting down the reactor. And when he describes zoning unconstitutional and "communistic seizure of our property," it becomes clear Bonser's not just some acid-

burned Jesus freak cavorting free and naked with angels in shaded glades. This man is serious.

Of the 10 television evangelist shows he supports, Robertson's "700 Club" was not his favorite. But when Robertson took the plunge and announced his candidacy, Bonser's heart told him to pick Pat at the polls. "I wanted a Christian," he explains. "Otherwise I'd have been for Kemp."

After Bonser became a campaign contributor, he called Robertson's headquarters to express his support. Soon thereafter Robertson workers showed up with an eight-by-four-foot Robertson sign to hang beneath the "Cedar Waters Nudist Park" marquee on Route 125, some three miles from Bonser's resort.

Cedar Water's 350 forested acres, traced with roads and hiking trails, are centered on a 30-acre lake and dotted with clumps of house trailers and tiny summer cottages. The summer guests, some third-generation nudists, have made themselves at home by naming their residences with monikers like "Whistle Stop," "Rawhide Valley" and "The Lord's Retreat." One clearing, designated "Bare-It-All Corral," is used for larger get-togethers.

Twenty-five families live year-round at Cedar Waters. Other than Bonser's assertion that "this is Robertson country" and a half-dozen bumper stickers on parked cars, there is no way to tell how many were actually enthused with "God's candidate."

But to stay at Cedar Waters, it helps to be an evangelical Christian. Consider the rules: "sexual promiscuity and excessive physical con-

tact" are banned, as are alcohol, pets, spitting in the lake and denying Jesus.

Swimsuits, too, are against the rules, even when windsurfing. An exception is made for the pathologically modest, who may don bottoms but are enjoined from wading deeper than their knees. Bonser seems epidemic-conscious; guests are told to put their posterior on a towel when sitting on common chairs, benches, picnic tables, in the "Grin & Bare It Restaurant" and in the sauna.

Cedar Waters is supposed to be "families and couples only," but Bonser says he's flexible. "If you bring your girlfriend and talk to us for a while, we'll go ahead and let you in." Cedar Waters literature also makes a point of mentioning dog and horse tracks nearby, perhaps indicating this evangelical nudist has nothing against gambling dens, either.

Bonser is well known in New Hampshire for his refusal to allow the town of Nottingham selectmen to zone his park. He says he's gone to jail four times for a total of 113 days and been assessed \$500,000 in fines for refusing to comply with regulations that Bonser says are designed to put him out of business. "The Constitution says the land is mine," he says, invoking echoes of the state's "Live Free or Die" motto. "I can do what I want on it."

Bonser readily agrees Robertson would shut down Cedar Waters if he could but, he says, shrugging at this crazy mixed-up world we live in, "Jesus says, 'just grin and bare it.'"

—Andrew Galarneau



## Treating the victims of torture

They suffer chronic headaches. They can't sleep without agonizing nightmares. They draw pictures of beatings, disembowelments, rapes.

But according to therapists, refugees to the U.S. who were torture victims in Southeast Asia and Latin America, are unlikely to seek help for these debilitating emotional disorders. They are terrified the U.S. will send them back to their torturers. This is a particular problem for Latin Americans who are frequently refused asylum.

Even if they seek help, they may have trouble finding it. That's partly because mental-health workers feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the traumas the refugees experienced, says Dr. Richard Mollica, a Harvard psychiatrist who is one of the nation's leading authorities on treatment of torture victims. He directs the Indochinese Psychiatry Clinic at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Boston, which in its five-year existence has seen 1,000 patients.

Since 1975, about a million refugees have come to the U.S., most of them from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Waves of people also have arrived after fleeing violence and persecution in El Salvador, Guatemala, Argentina, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, the Soviet Union and Haiti.

A disturbingly high number, including almost all Cambodians, have suffered torture, rape, or harsh imprisonment, or have witnessed atrocities to family members and



A drawing by a Cambodian refugee depicting atrocities suffered under the Khmer Rouge.

friends. According to Dr. Antonio Martinez, a psychologist who heads the new Kovler Center for Victims of Torture in Chicago, many Salvadorans and Guatemalans were regularly exposed to the sight of "costalitos"—bags full of cut-up human body parts left on river banks to scare people into political submission.

People who have lived these nightmares frequently exhibit depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and physical traumas. They often feel isolated from their ethnic communities and adapt poorly to resettlement. Yet, specialized treatment facilities in the U.S. for torture victims exist only in a few cities around the country, and there are few professionals who know how to treat these unique problems.

It is particularly hard to treat what Mollica says is his most traumatized

patient group—Cambodian widows. These ravaged women, who are primarily Buddhist, understand torture as bad karma, not as a violation of their human rights. They are also loathe to bring up traumas involving sexual violence, which were extremely common in the experience of Southeast Asian refugees. He says establishing trust is extremely important, but is difficult.

Martinez finds that patients tell him exactly what horrors they went through if he asks them directly. The problem is that many therapists won't ask because they are afraid of what they'll hear. This is especially true, says Mollica, for refugee therapists who suffered many of the same atrocities and don't want to relive them.

Both the Boston and Chicago programs rely on refugee staff to translate and serve as co-therapists. It's crucial that the North American therapist and the bilingual worker be co-equals in therapy, says Martinez. "If you use them only as translators, that replicates the colonial mentality, is disrespectful to the patient and destroys trust."

Interestingly, the federal government's asylum policies are one reason the Chicago program was started, says Martinez. Travelers Aid already has a federally funded refugee mental-health program. But the U.S. government won't pay for treatment of refugees who lack official political asylum. This effectively excludes those Latin American refugees who are fleeing torturers who double as U.S. allies.

—Harris Meyer

## Excluded voices in Mexico-U.S. summit meeting

When Ronald Reagan met with Mexico's President Miguel de la Madrid last month to discuss trade, debt, immigration and drugs, the fundamental implications of these issues for their peoples remained off the official agenda.

Both presidents congratulated each other for their "realist" and "democratic" approaches. Although each spoke in the name of his people, in Mexico the people speak a different language. As a Mexican writer recently said, "They speak in the royal 'we' of Louis XIV, as if they spoke for the majority. If so, then this is a country of the great minorities, the workers, the peasants, the teachers, the students and the urban poor are the minorities—the small circle in power is the only majority."

Protests by a broad front of opposition parties and organizations were held the day of the presidential summit. More than a dozen massive marches have taken place throughout Mexico in recent weeks protesting the government's austerity policies. In January the nationally known community leader *Superbarrio*, disguised in his superhero mask, led several hundred urban poor to

the Citibank building in Mexico City and pasted a banner across the entrance that read "closed for violations." He explained: "This bank represents the interests of the international financial community and we Mexicans are reaching the limits of our patience in witnessing the plunder of our wealth, our resources and our labor." Many of his companions wore no shirts or shoes to illustrate that the new official list of basic necessities no longer includes these items.

Two days later some 60,000 people representing left parties, independent unions, students, peasants and community organizations marched on Mexico City's main square. They rebuked the president's claim that his economic policy is "the only viable solution" as "false and insulting."

The CIA, meanwhile, foresees "chaos on our border," and policy analysts warn that Mexico will pose "the single most serious foreign policy problem" for the U.S. by the end of the century. But for Mexico, the U.S. has been its primary foreign problem since the U.S. seized half of Mexico's territory 140 years ago.

Over the last six crisis-torn years, Mexico's subjugation to its neighbor's interests has accelerated. The Reagan administration "wants to place Mexico totally within the economic and political orbit of the

U.S.," explains Harvard historian John Womack. "They pursue a complete subordination." Bilateral issues have increasingly been solved through unilateral U.S. initiatives: The Simpson-Rodino immigration law, the U.S.-backed International Monetary Fund's (IMF) debt payment strategies, U.S. trade and Central America policies.

Reagan's policies pit American workers against their Mexican counterparts as cheaper wages across the border allow corporations to pressure employees for givebacks or threaten to run away. Monetarist policies applied on both sides of the border have reduced real industrial wages in Mexico to 1939 levels and the real value of U.S. minimum wage to what it was in the 1950s. Immigration laws now give police unprecedented powers of surveillance and harassment. Government rhetoric exacerbates racial tensions by accusing Mexicans of stealing jobs and threatening "our way of life."

"Reaganomics," translated and exported across the border, differs from our own only by creating wider devastation in a dependent, developing nation. With the failure of the bankers to revitalize Mexico's economy, popular movements demand a democratic solution to rescue the majority from paying tribute to Wall Street and Mexico's tiny elite.

—David Brooks

general. Another is David Jones, former chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. • GE was awarded a Pentagon contract to estimate how much the Soviet Union was spending on aircraft engines. GE is a leading aircraft engine manufacturer for the U.S. Air Force. • In 1985 GE pleaded guilty to 108 counts of overcharging the government. The company was fined \$1.04 million and prevented from receiving government contracts for three weeks. The only thing the study seems to lack is a full portrait of GE's controversial CEO, John "Neutron Jack" Welch. This very readable report is available for \$8.45 from INFACT, 256 Hanover St., Boston, MA 02113.

## Opportunity knocks

Some-unknown corporate executives know how to take advantage of disaster. On January 2, about 730,000 gallons of diesel oil spilled from a broken tank into Pennsylvania's Monongahela River. The oil then flowed on into the Ohio and Mississippi River system. According to Don Hopey of the *Pittsburgh Press*, as that diesel oil was pouring into the river, some company, or companies, decided to dump three cancer-causing industrial solvents into the Ohio River. Two of those chemicals, chloroform and methylene chloride, have since been found at levels that significantly exceed the federal cancer level for rivers and streams. These two carcinogens accumulate in animal fat, posing a potential risk to folks who eat the exposed fish. Aerial photographs show that as the oil spill was taking place unknown liquids, perhaps these solvents, were being discharged into the river near Wheeling. Those discharges did not appear to be coming from any building or industrial facility, suggesting that the chemicals were perhaps trucked in. Although an investigation is taking place, it will be almost impossible to find the culprit(s). The carcinogenic solvents in question are used by about 85 companies in the Wheeling area.

## Acid rain kills more than trees

Acid rain is killing people, especially those living in the northeast U.S. and eastern Canada. That's the implication of a recent study by the University of California-Berkeley's director of cancer epidemiology, Dr. Cedric Garland. The study documents how people living in the "acid rain belt" suffer an unusually high cancer rate. Further the problem seems to be getting worse. In Vermont, for example, on average 16 percent more people are dying from lung disease than died during 1981-85. Further, from 1982-86, deaths from lung cancer in Vermont increased by 28 percent. From 1980-86, deaths from breast cancer rose 34 percent. According to Merritt Clifton writing in the *Vermont Vanguard*, these revelations, though startling, are not so new. Two years ago scientists at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in New York estimated that acid rain annually contributes to the death of about 50,000 Americans and 8,000 Canadians. In 1979, two professors at Yale concluded that acid rain contributed to 187,686 deaths and directly caused another 23,756. And in 1976, Dr. Carl Shy of the National Air Pollution Control Administration testified before a Senate hearing on the Clean Air Act that sulfur dioxide emissions (the smoke released from coal-burning power plants that combines with moisture in the atmosphere to make acid rain) were causing approximately 5 million episodes of respiratory illness each year. Yes, it appears that acid rain is a public health issue to be concerned about, especially since it is a problem that is being handled by the Environmental Protection Agency.

## EPA's hot line

Fred Nelson, a founder of the National Network for the Chemically Hypersensitive in Wrightsville Beach, N.C., sent this note to the Pesticide Education Project, a pesticide-awareness group in Carrboro, N.C.:

"An EPA staffer accidentally gave me the number for [EPA] Director Lee Thomas' personal phone. I called and his administrative assistant answered, 'Director Thomas' office.' The response to my query, 'Is the director available,' was 'What company are you with?' I responded, 'I'm not with any company but with a foundation concerned with the health effects of pesticides.' Pause. 'Does the director personally know you?' 'No but he should be aware of the foundation.' Very long pause, followed by, 'The director isn't available; someone will get back to you.'"



By Kathryn Phillips

LOS ANGELES

**A** NASTY LITTLE BUDGET CUT MADE LAST year by California's conservative, labor-hostile governor appears to be turning into the best thing to happen to organized labor in a long time.

It has given labor a ballot issue that may be as hard to slam as mom and apple pie: an employee's right to a safe, toxic-free workplace.

At the same time, it has made Republican Gov. George Deukmejian vulnerable to a host of attacks, including some from quarters where he can usually count on support.

The cut eliminated the state's occupational safety and health program—Cal/OSHA—for about 10 million workers employed in private industry. As of last July 1, duties once covered by Cal/OSHA have been taken over by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

The \$7 million cut (from an approximately \$40 billion state budget) has become, according to one prominent political columnist, Deukmejian's Vietnam—a stupid mistake from which he won't back down.

**Faults and strengths:** The state program often had been criticized, by both labor and industry. Labor and environmentalists complained that the program—especially under Deukmejian's administration—had been so wracked by budget cuts and staff cuts that it was ineffectively enforcing its generally strict standards. Industry, on the other hand, had complained since Cal/OSHA's creation in 1973 that the program's inspectors were too petty, likely to fine for the slightest infraction.

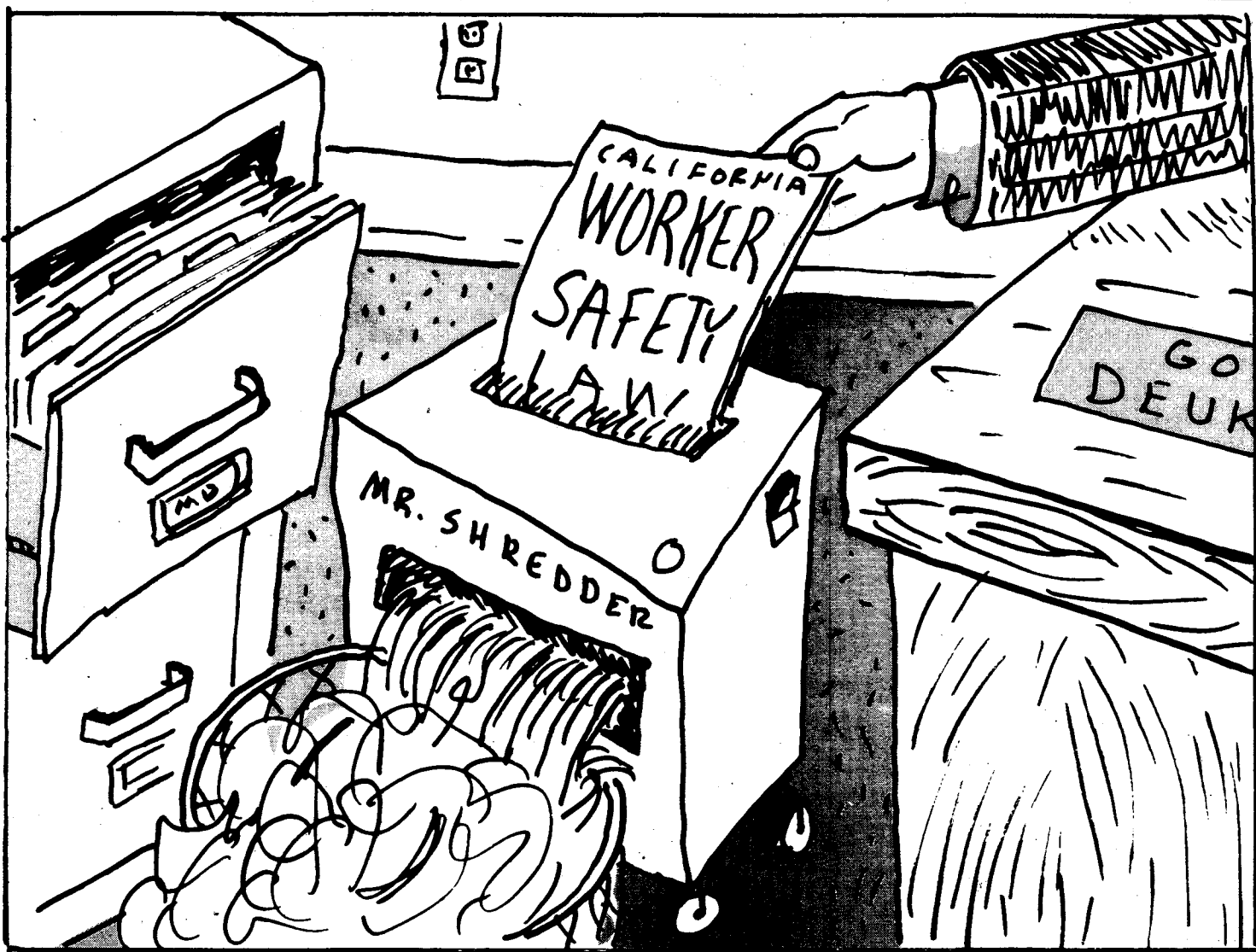
Yet even on its worst days, Cal/OSHA was viewed by supporters and critics as far superior to the federal OSHA.

The state agency, for instance, had standards for 170 toxic chemicals that are not covered by the federal OSHA. The state program investigated accidents that resulted in one or more hospitalizations, whereas federal OSHA only investigates accidents where there are five or more hospitalizations. The state program investigated anonymous complaints about hazardous workplaces. Its federal counterpart requires complainants to provide their name, although the federal agency says it guarantees confidentiality. The state program's rule-makers were in California, while federal OSHA's rule-makers are across the country in Washington, D.C.

Moreover, the federal OSHA, even after a six-month staffing gear-up, has only about 100 inspectors in California, half of what Cal/OSHA had in the month before the budget cut was proposed. The federal agency has no plans, so far, to match the number of inspectors—or inspections—Cal/OSHA had.

**Falling into quicksand:** Nobody had openly called for Cal/OSHA's abolition in the months before the governor announced he would cut the state program. Thus, he caught even his industry backers off guard and sparked a battle that has grown larger and more complicated than even a politically savvy governor could have expected. Deukmejian and his cabinet official in charge of industrial relations, Ron Rinaldi, insist the governor's action was necessary to meet budget restraints.

But the governor's opponents say Deukmejian had other motives. "He equates Cal/OSHA with organized labor," said Democratic State Assemblyman Richard Floyd. "He



## Work-safety cut unites labor

has a very narrow perception of things. Cal/OSHA is probably more important to unorganized people. A kid that's getting burned in a [restaurant] grease fire...he's not organized."

The abolition has annoyed many of Deukmejian's industry backers, particularly those in construction, who say now that they were never consulted.

"We wanted to maintain the status quo," said Dick Munn of the Associated General

### CALIFORNIA

Contractors of California, which represents most of the state's non-residential contractors. Industry's biggest worry now is that accidents will increase, triggering a sharp rise in workers' compensation insurance rates.

Cal/OSHA's dismantling also has fueled Democratic Party attacks on the governor's anti-regulatory policies and given front-page status to a normally ignored agency.

It has entangled the governor in a court battle that could end up limiting his favorite program-slashing tool, the line-item veto. The state Supreme Court is reviewing a lower court ruling that Deukmejian exceeded his power by killing Cal/OSHA despite legislative budget language designed to prevent a simple line-item veto of the program.

**A blessing in disguise:** But most important, the governor has handed organized labor a statewide issue with which it can build broad coalitions, boost its image and expand its support. The governor's move has meant an unexpected boost for labor in a state where less than 20 percent of the workforce is organized, union support in Southern California is weak, and labor's political

power statewide is unpredictable, at best.

To its credit, organized labor hasn't let this opportunity slip by. Last spring, it used the Cal/OSHA issue as incitement to pour volunteers and about \$100,000 into a Democratic candidate's campaign in a hotly contested election for a state senate seat. The seat represented the northern end of conservative Orange County. The Democrat, Cecil Green, won and organized labor proved that it wasn't as dormant as critics and press accounts have long suggested.

Then in December—after failing to convince either Deukmejian to rescind his Cal/OSHA abolition plans or Republican legislators to vote for a rare override—California Labor Federation chief John Henning announced that organized labor would lead a statewide drive to put on the November 1988 ballot an initiative to reinstate funding for the agency.

"It's not the ordinary thing that labor puts an initiative on the ballot. Usually we're in a defensive position," Henning said. The last

**The elimination of the occupational safety and health program caught even Deukmejian's backers off guard and sparked a more complex battle than even a politically savvy governor could have expected.**

comparable drive occurred in 1958 when labor fought a right-to-work law. This time, labor expects to spend about \$2 million to qualify and pass the initiative.

Polls commissioned by one labor union last November showed that 65 percent of the public favored restoration of Cal/OSHA, Henning said. Sixty-one percent weren't even aware that the agency's authority had been transferred to federal OSHA.

**Building a coalition:** The Sierra Club—the state's largest environmental organization—and several health and medical groups, including the American Cancer Society, have thrown their support behind the initiative. By mid-February, two months before the April deadline for initiative petitions, petitioners had collected 323,000 signatures. They need 372,178 to qualify and there seems little doubt they'll get them.

"It's an easy sell on the street," said Marc Grossman, a campaign consultant working on the initiative.

No business groups have come out in favor of the initiative so far, but neither have any indicated they will aggressively fight it.

"We have been very actively neutral," said Tim Shannon of the California Manufacturers Association. "To be honest, we are neutral because we have members coming down on both sides of [the issue]."

Ironically, Shannon's words echo the past sentiment of the state's labor leaders on a number of key issues. Torn by their members' different interests, the leaders often have split their support or wound up taking neutral positions. This time, though, California labor leaders are presenting to the public a united image and they seem to be enjoying it. And Gov. Deukmejian deserves a lot of the credit.



By John B. Judis

RICHMOND, VA.

**T**HE CONSERVATIVES' SOUTHERN STRATEGY has been to unite middle-class Republicans with blue-collar Democrats by making covert racial appeals and by adopting the fundamentalist social agenda. It worked in some states, like Alabama and North Carolina, in the early '80s, but it is now beginning to destroy the Republican Party. Nowhere is this more evident than in Virginia.

Even while Ronald Reagan was easily carrying Virginia in 1980 and 1984, the state's once dominant Republican Party was steadily losing ground to the Democrats. In 1980 the Republicans controlled one of two Senate seats (the other seat was held by Harry Byrd, a Democrat turned independent who consistently voted with the Republicans); nine out of 10 congressional seats; and all the major state offices, including governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general. In 1980 the total congressional vote was 64.7 percent Republican and 31.3 percent Democratic. At the time Virginia was as Republican as Utah.

Today the situation has changed. Republicans control both Senate seats, but will likely lose one of them in November to former Gov. Chuck Robb. They control only five of 10 congressional seats, and in 1986 the Democratic congressional vote exceeded the Republicans by 52.2 percent to 44.7 percent. And the Democrats control every major state office and the legislature. Now Virginia is about as Democratic as Michigan.

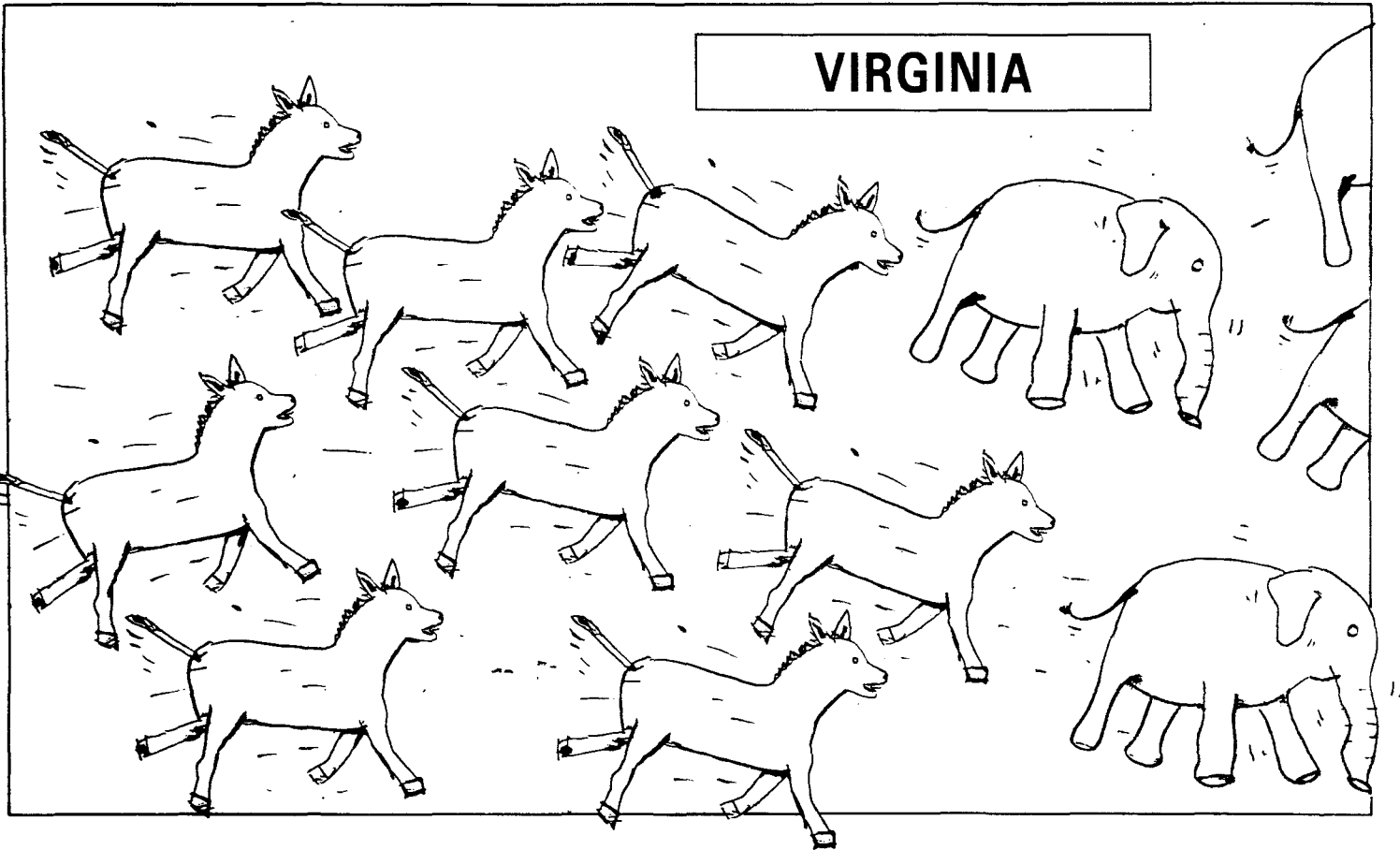
The Democrats in Virginia succeeded because they were able to build a coalition of moderate whites and blacks. The Republicans fell apart because they abandoned the black vote and courted the votes of the segregationist and fundamentalist far-right.

**Robb revolution:** The Democratic Party dominated Virginia politics from 1902, when blacks were disenfranchised, until the early '60s, when the party was torn apart by the Byrd wing's opposition to civil rights and to state expenditures for economic development. In 1969, Linwood Holton, a moderate Republican who backed school desegregation, won the governorship.

In 1973 and 1977, the Democrats nominated populist Henry Howell for governor. Many of the leading Byrd Democrats switched to the Republican Party. One of them, Mills Godwin, narrowly defeated Howell in 1973. Then in 1977, a Republican moderate, John Dalton, again defeated Howell.

But with the entry of the Byrd Democrats, the Republican Party was torn between its moderate wing, based largely in the West, and the Byrd conservatives. As the national Republican Party shifted sharply rightward in the late '70s, so did the state's Republican Party. This created disaster for Virginia Republicans in 1981.

After the 1977 debacle, the Democrats, reacting to Howell's success in primaries, substituted a convention system for choosing nominees. In the 1981 governor's race, they picked as their gubernatorial candidate neither a populist nor a Byrd Democrat, but Lt. Gov. Chuck Robb, Lyndon Johnson's son-in-law. Robb was a moderate on civil rights but a fiscal conservative. The Republicans nominated Atty. Gen. Marshall Coleman to oppose Robb. In 1977 Coleman had won a third of the black vote when he ran as a moderate against a segregationist Byrd Democrat, but in 1981 he was pressured by party leaders to run a right-wing campaign.



## The GOP's slow road to destruction

Coleman opposed a state Martin Luther King holiday bill and also opposed extending the Voting Rights Act.

Coleman's refusal to back the King holiday was a turning point in his campaign. Before that, he was even with Robb in the polls. Afterward, he trailed and never caught up. Robb not only won more than 90 percent of the black vote, but he received almost half of the politically independent white, middle-class suburban vote, which makes up about half of Virginia's electorate. "Many white people in Virginia have racial prejudices," said Richmond reporter Margaret Edds, the author of *Free At Last*, "but they don't want to be openly confronted with them. If they are confronted, there will be a backlash to that."

Robb himself equivocated about civil rights during his campaign, but once in office he moved decisively to bring blacks and women into his administration—appointing more than 900 in his term. Robb's first executive order established a state policy of equal opportunity in hiring and promotion. His predecessor had spent \$260,000 with minority contractors in his last year of office. By contrast, Robb was spending \$36 million a year by 1985, his last year in office.

But Robb simultaneously endeared himself to Virginia's suburban middle class. He boosted economic development in the state, improved education and cleaned up the Chesapeake Bay, yet at the same time cut 200 employees from the state payroll. Lt. Gov. Douglas Wilder, who was in the state Senate when Robb was governor, said, "He made it possible for another Democratic administration to come in without people fearing the bottom was going to drop out."

**Carry me back:** In 1985, however, the Democrats seemed ready to risk all. They nominated Gerald Baliles, a Robb clone as governor, but also Wilder, a black who had bucked the party's segregationist elders. It was widely assumed that Wilder would bring down the ticket, but he ran a brilliant campaign, beginning with a 4,000-mile, station-wagon tour through rural Southside Virginia, an area that George Wallace carried in 1968

and that Reagan had won easily in 1980 and 1984.

Wilder also rejected attempts to paint him as a "liberal"—suggesting at one point that the term had racial connotations. He ran a tough law-and-order campaign, favoring the death penalty and opposing collective bargaining for state employees. In all, Wilder won 52 percent of the vote and 44 percent of the white vote. He got 49 percent in the suburbs and he won five of Wallacite Southside counties.

Wilder was aided, ironically, by Republican race-baiting. At a rally for Wilder's opponent, John Chichester, former Gov. Godwin attacked Wilder for a resolution he had introduced 15 years before against Virginia's state song, "Carry Me Back to Ol' Virginny." Wilder had objected to the song's plantation ethos, including its references to "darkies." Wilder had dropped the issue, however, and Godwin's use of it was seen as an attempt to fuel racial resentment against Wilder.

**The state's Republican Party has basically fallen apart. The party made two substantial mistakes: it abandoned the black vote and it too strongly courted the votes of the segregationist and fundamentalist far-right.**

Godwin's tactic backfired. According to the Republicans' pollster, Ed DeBolt, Chichester's support in the Northern Virginia and Tidewater suburbs dropped four to six percent after Godwin's speech.

In his campaign against Wyatt Durette, Baliles benefitted from the Republicans' identification with the religious right. Baliles' pro-choice stance won him votes in the suburbs, where he took 55 percent. In the cam-

paign's closing week, Baliles ran ads linking Durette to the Rev. Jerry Falwell, a very unpopular figure in the state. But most important of all, Baliles was aided by the fact that while he was focussing on education and economic development, Durette was crowing about abortion and school prayer. "They are not things that the people of Virginia think the governor should be addressing," DeBolt said.

**Suburban voters:** In Virginia, the lessons for Republicans are clear. And, indeed, many Republicans, including DeBolt and Sen. John Warner, understand them. But the Republicans may find their hands tied as Virginia Beach televangelist Pat Robertson brings more fundamentalists into the Republican Party. "They'll dominate, and we'll continue to lose elections," one prominent Republican rued.

The lessons for Democrats are also clear. As University of Richmond political scientist Tom Morris said, the Democrats' success was predicated on their abandoning the primary system and gaining the respect of white suburban voters. In the '70s, the primary system had nominated populists or Byrd Democrats, and neither could defeat Republicans. It took Democrats like Robb and Wilder to win in Virginia.

Other Southern Democrats have followed Virginia's lead in building coalitions between moderate whites and blacks. In 1986, for instance, moderate Democrats in Robb's mold won back Senate seats in North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida by combining the black vote with more than 40 percent of the white vote. But it may be more difficult to export some aspects of Virginia politics. It is more prosperous and more middle class than many deep South states. It was less touched by both populism and racism. Robb may be a model for Florida Democrats; but Arkansas' more populist Gov. Bill Clinton may also provide a model.

Whatever the case, Virginia shows that the Democrats can win in the South and that the conservative strategy, while successful in the short run, may doom the Republicans in the long run.



# WELCOME TO DIOXINVILLE, ARKANSAS



Alex Brandon/Arkansas Democrat

**T**his is the first part of a three-part series of articles on the chemical contamination of a small Arkansas community. It is the worst hazardous waste situation yet known in the U.S., more serious than those that forced evacuation of residents from Love Canal, N.Y. and Times Beach, Mo.

Babies are dying and adults succumbing to sudden disease in three neighborhoods that border EPA Superfund cleanup sites in Jacksonville, Ark. But the ramifications reach far beyond these sites.

Jacksonville holds a mirror to larger national questions surrounding toxic wastes, incineration and the continued production of deadly chemicals. It also reflects neglect and mismanagement by federal and state governments. And the picture encompasses not only the Pentagon and its Agent Orange and rocket fuel contracts, but the hidden involvement of multinational corporations and foreign entanglements.

The Arkansas saga is a microcosm of a much bigger problem in an increasingly toxic America, for what has happened in Jacksonville is far from an isolated phenomenon. Particularly in the rural South, many similar communities fighting for their economic survival have become dumping grounds. While state and local officials as well as business leaders protect their interests, the impoverished suffer—and take on the struggle against greed and indifference. In dozens of areas, people like Arkansas' Patty Frase are running the gauntlet to fight the pollution affecting their homes. This is their story, too.



## By Dick Russell

JACKSONVILLE, ARK.

IT IS A QUIET SUNDAY AFTERNOON IN THIS CITY OF nearly 30,000 residents 12 miles north-east of the state capital of Little Rock. Patty Frase turns her station wagon off the freeway and onto Route 67 leading into town, then says, "Just don't touch the food, drink the water or even wash your hands in Jacksonville."

Some local citizens don't call their hometown Jacksonville. They refer to it as "Dioxinville," and to the Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology as the "Department of Political Corruption and Endangerment." And with good reason: this Arkansas community is the site of the worst dioxin contamination in the U.S., with levels of the poison found in local soil testing well above the range that led to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 1983 evacuation of Times Beach, Mo.

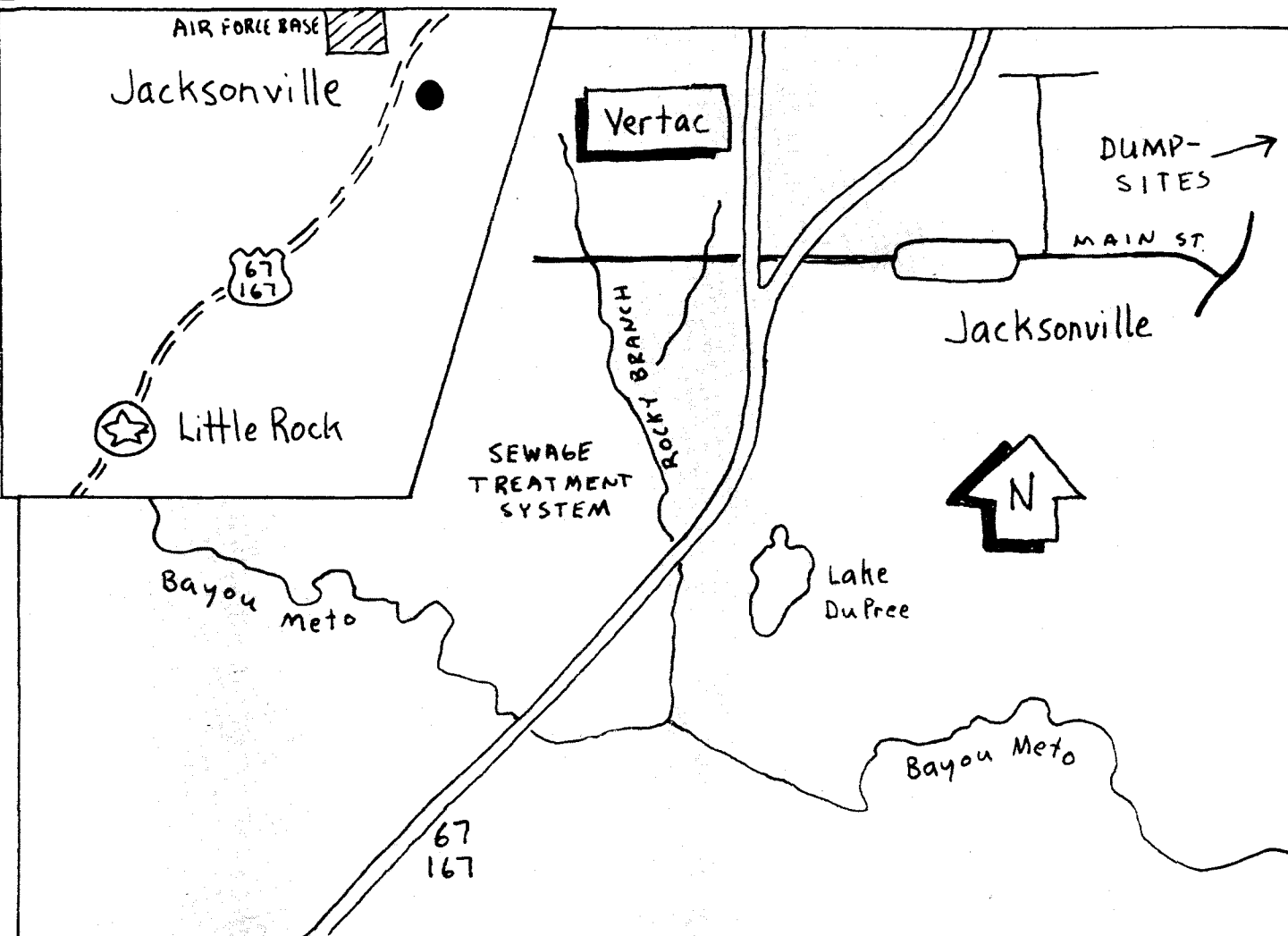
"The people of Jacksonville should have long ago been given the right to evacuate and received compensation for their homes," says Lois Gibbs, director of the national Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Wastes based in Arlington, Va. "The dimension of the problem is just outrageous—babies dying, whole neighborhoods with unbelievable cancer rates. When I was there three years ago, they were talking about dioxin being in the drinking water supply while the federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was saying there was no cause for alarm. The truth really has never been exposed."

Frase has been working around-the-clock since 1981 to get the truth out. She says she finds herself up against many formidable opponents seeking to keep the lid on an explosive situation: the Pentagon, the CDC, the EPA, Dow Chemical, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton, his state bureaucracies and a local Chamber of Commerce-sponsored group called Jacksonville People With Pride.

**"Witch's brew":** Ever since World War II, three different chemical companies had manufactured a growing range of toxic chemicals here. The first plant, locally owned Reasor-Hill Chemical, was originally located on Little Rock Air Force Base property. After moving in 1948 to the current plant site, the company continued to manufacture the since-banned DDT, aldrin and dieldrin pesticides and insecticides. Hercules, Inc., which took over the site in 1961, produced at the plant nearly 20 percent of the Agent Orange shipped overseas for defoliating the jungles during the Vietnam War. After Hercules sold the Jacksonville operation, Vertac Chemical Corporation continued to manufacture for domestic use both of the herbicides used in Agent Orange. They were 2,4,5-T, banned as a cancer-causing agent by the EPA in 1983, and 2,4-D, also a suspected human carcinogen.

The result, as described in one federal court proceeding, has been a "witch's brew" of contamination of air and water, not only in Jacksonville but also stretching for miles along the Bayou Meto flood plain. About 20 chemicals have been measured in Jacksonville's air, including 12 that were also found in tests at contaminated Love Canal, N.Y.

Then there is dioxin, a contaminant by-product of Agent Orange, 2,4,5-T and possibly 2,4-D herbicides. According to a publication of the EPA's Office of Research and Development titled *Dioxins*, "It is reasonable to presume that the slightest trace of 2,3,7,8-TCDD [the most lethal form of dioxin] in the



environment may have adverse effects on both human and animal populations."

Dr. Samuel Epstein, one of the nation's foremost experts on the health effects of toxic chemicals, says TCDD is the most potent cancer-causing and fetus-malforming substance known, producing effects in experimental animals at concentrations as low as 10 to 100 parts per trillion. (See story on page 10 for more on dioxin.)

The EPA considers dioxin dangerous to human health when it measures one part per billion. Anything above that "action level" is supposed to compel the EPA to begin cleanup. Just one part per million is therefore 1,000 times more toxic. In Jacksonville dioxin was measured in about 2,800 barrels of 2,4,5-T herbicide waste stored at the chemical site at concentrations as high as 111 parts per million. The average was 40 parts per million. Some of the barrels of 2,4-D waste were discovered to be leaking when the EPA moved onto the site in 1987 and initiated re-drumming and other cleanup. Altogether, at least 30,000 barrels of hazardous materials still await disposal.

Levels of dioxin higher than one part per billion have also been found in two soil samples taken from residents' yards near Vertac, as well as in the air, in the city sewer system and lagoons, in the sediments of the nearby flood plain, and in fish and wood ducks.

The Jacksonville chemical plant currently ranks 18th on the EPA's Superfund list of nearly 1,000 priority toxic waste cleanups. As an EPA official testified at a 1984 hearing, even if dioxin were not present, "the highly toxic nature of the other chemicals would cause it to be included."

And the people of Jacksonville face another, even grimmer, possibility. At a court proceeding against Vertac in Little Rock last summer, U.S. District Judge Henry Woods reiterated concerns he had expressed since 1980 that the wastes are stored in "tornado alley." Added Judge Woods, "Certainly we won't want a Chernobyl-type disaster with

this spewed all over Arkansas. Some plan needs to be developed to get rid of that material. I'm sick of it."

Citing an inability to meet standards for the discharge of pollutants into the city sewer system, Vertac closed its doors in January 1986. The next year two more Superfund sites were added at two Jacksonville landfills.

**"Go get 'em, Patty":** For years, there were two mainstays of the local economy—the chemical plants and the Little Rock Air Force Base. Since the mid-'50s, Frase's father had served off and on as acting base commander.

"In 1974 my father had just retired from the military at 51 and was in good shape," Frase says as she turns onto MacArthur Road toward Vertac. "Then he woke up one morning, went into a coma and was dead by noon. There was a major fire at the plant right before this, a blowout when the reactor vessel caught fire one night. It destroyed everything around that area. All the oaks, every hardwood practically disintegrated overnight. There were dead dogs, dead squirrels. All the fish died in the discharge area into Rocky Branch Creek."

"For years we'd lived a few blocks away, and I have no doubt that my father died of chemical poisoning," she continues. "They did an autopsy, but couldn't find anything, so they decided that his colon burst."

"My mother started checking around the area, and said, 'Everyone here is dying of cancer. We're moving.' Right after that she went into the hospital with liver cancer. She had just turned 50, and nobody had ever had cancer on either side of our family. The day before she died she told me, 'Go get 'em, Patty, and watch out for your health.'"

So she did. Despite her own mounting health problems, Frase organized the Arkansas Chemical Clean-Up Alliance and eventually was named to the Governor's Task Force on Hazardous Waste. Moving with her husband Tommy to the town of Benton, 30 miles on the other side of Little Rock, she had six miscarriages before finally conceiving a

daughter, now age two. Frase, who is deaf in one ear from peripheral nerve damage, and suffers periodic bouts of severe chloracne (skin lesions resulting from contact with TCDD) as well as a hormonal imbalance that finds her gaining and then losing large amounts of weight, was one of 65 Jacksonville residents who settled out of court with Vertac in a personal injury and wrongful death class-action lawsuit the day before Vertac shut down its operations.

"When I was in high school and a lot of us kids had our lymph nodes start to get huge, the doctors at the base told us we were allergic to deodorant," Frase continues. When, after her mother's death, she first approached Vertac officials to ask about the chemical odor in the air, "I was told that it wasn't coming from Jacksonville, that I was smelling the paper mills in Pine Bluff. I went to the state regulatory agencies, but nobody there would give me any straight answers either."

Frase slows down as her car approaches the 140-acre Vertac compound, its interior shielded by a tall chain-link fence and a series of pine trees contracted by the city as part of a "beautification program." Pointing out the window, she says, "Jacksonville wants to make it look good, so they hired a company to put pines where all the hardwoods used to be. The hardwoods' roots are so long that they'd get into the contamination and die."

**EPA's delayed reaction:** Today a chemical odor continues to linger in the air for blocks around the Vertac site. Behind the wall of trees stands a waste mountain containing the highest levels of dioxin ever measured in the U.S. Nobody knows how many more barrels were long ago buried here and elsewhere, or their contents simply dumped into the Rocky Branch Creek that curls away from the site to empty into the flood plain and eventually the Arkansas River. Despite

*Continued on following page*



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health complaints and reports of massive fish kills as far back as the '50s, the dioxin threat was not brought to public attention until 1979. At the time, following criticisms of the EPA's handling of the Love Canal waste crisis—a situation the agency admitted was far less severe than Jacksonville's—an EPA spokesperson told the *Washington Post* that the agency would move faster on cleaning up Vertac than on any previous site.

But while the EPA did conduct testing for contamination, eight years passed before the agency sent a team of workers in "moon suits" to begin the cleanup. Not until Vertac said it could no longer afford to continue to re-drum corrosive wastes there did the EPA take responsibility on Feb. 1, 1987.

The team sent to Jacksonville found "drum alley," a large storage area with thousands of the heavy corroding barrels stacked three-high, in violation of federal regulations. And they found "Vertac mountain," where 20,000 cubic yards of dioxin-contaminated sludge dredged from old lagoons on the site had been piled about 20 feet high. Altogether, more than 100,000 cubic yards of contaminated materials, enough to cover 20 football fields three-feet deep, were discovered within the plant's perimeter. Besides the leaking drums, soil was eroding, allowing contamination to wash off the site.

Many of the buildings contained "wall-to-wall, ceiling-to-ceiling drums," the EPA's on-scene coordinator, David Woods Gray, told the *Arkansas Democrat*, one of Little Rock's two daily newspapers. Some of the drums were packed tight in concrete bunkers, a

carry-over from the site's original use as a World War II ordnance plant. The *Democrat* reported that aisle space proved inadequate to perform inspections or maneuver equipment to remove the leaking drums. Not only were the buildings structurally unsound, the EPA found, but also heavily contaminated. One tank had been leaking dioxin for so long that stalactites and stalagmites made of the gummy chemical had formed under it. A similar substance ran regularly into the floor drains leading to the site's central drainage ditch. One of the four ditches drains directly into the Rocky Branch Creek.

During the EPA's first six months on the site last year, workers built two huge barns to house some of the drums and erected 10,000 feet of four-foot-high fencing around the perimeter. The agency also re-drummed

1983 and spring of 1985, found the worst contamination below the Jacksonville sewage treatment plant's outflow into the Bayou Meto flood plain. The city's entire sewer system was deteriorating, filled with broken lines. For years after heavy rains, sewage overflows occurred regularly in the residential area south of the plant. And during dry periods, the EPA noted, chemicals likely filtered into the shallow groundwater adjacent to the sewer lines. The average dioxin concentration in the sewage collection system was 21.5 parts per billion (ppb), and dioxin was detected as high as 200 ppb—200 times the EPA's action level for cleanup.

Then there was the flood plain itself, mostly irrigated farm land, laced with dioxin contamination after heavy rains. Out of 324 soil and sediment samples taken by the EPA

### **"This is one of the most serious public health disasters in the U.S.," says Adrienne Anderson. "The number of mysterious SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) deaths is horrifying."**

an average of 500 to 600 leaking barrels a week. The EPA, still on the site today, has authorized \$4.6 million for maintenance at Vertac. But after only nine months, it had already spent about \$3 million.

The contamination at the site, however, is only the beginning of the toxic chain.

**Bottom of the barrel:** An EPA study to determine where dioxin and other chemicals had migrated, conducted between the fall of

in a study of off-site pollution, more than one-third contained TCDD-dioxin. In tests of fish taken from the stream running along the Bayou Meto flood plain, TCDD-dioxin was detected at 35 times the Food and Drug Administration's action level, with dioxin showing up in fish as far as 80 miles downstream from the Vertac plant. So did a host of other persistent chlorinated hydrocarbon chemicals, some of which, like the banned DDT,

## **Dioxin: the most lethal substance ever produced by humans**

It is known as 2,3,7,8-TCDD, one of the 75 varieties of chlorinated dioxin compounds that have been filtering invisibly out of chemical pesticides, plastics and paper companies since the '40s. An unwanted byproduct contaminant of the manufacturing and burning process, nobody knows how much TCDD-dioxin is in the environment, or how to get rid of it or what it is doing to our bodies. But this much is certain: TCDD is the most lethal substance ever produced by humans, ranking third among all the known poisons behind nature's botulism and tetanus toxins.

In tests on laboratory animals, the lowest measurable doses of TCDD (down to one-trillionth of a guinea pig's body weight) have resulted in birth defects and cancer. This form of dioxin is about 10,000 times more deadly than sodium cyanide, commonly used in executions by gas, and about 500 times more toxic than strychnine. And while debate persists over its long-term effects on human health, the EPA has deemed it impossible to establish any safe "acceptable" level for TCDD-dioxin contamination.

"A very small amount will lead to ill health or death in many animal species," says Dr. Arnold Schecter, professor of preventive medicine at the State University of New York's health science center. "So it is classified as a super-toxin by both chemists and toxicologists. One of the very frightening things is that we are recently finding surprisingly elevated levels of dioxins in all the humans we have looked at in industrialized nations."

According to Schecter and other ex-

perts, TCDD not only causes cancer but magnifies the effects of other cancer-causing agents. Its long-term effects include birth defects, immune system and metabolic disorders, altered liver function and pathologic changes in the blood. Exposure to TCDD also produces skin lesions known as chloracne.

Dioxin is doubly dangerous because of its stability. In soil or the sediment of rivers and lakes, it may remain unchanged for years, climbing the food chain into the human diet. It is also easily absorbed into the body by breathing dioxin-laden dust particles, or through skin contact, accumulating in fatty tissues and organs like the liver.

The major sources of TCDD-dioxin are the products and wastes of chemical plants manufacturing chlorinated phenols such as the herbicides 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D (the components of Agent Orange), the wood preservative pentachlorophenol and the ash residues of municipal waste incinerators. Despite millions of tons of production of such wastes over a 40-year period, no restrictions were put in place until 1980. The use of 2,4,5-T on rice fields and rangelands was allowed until a year ago, when the EPA finally outlawed all uses of the herbicide. In 1987 it was revealed that the residues from paper mills also contain amounts of TCDDs.

Dioxin contamination has resulted in evacuations of residents in the Love Canal, N.Y. and Times Beach, Mo., areas. And dioxin exposure also prompted a lawsuit filed by more than 259,000 Vietnam veterans, who have suffered adverse

health effects from Agent Orange spraying in the jungles there. Studies of South Vietnamese infants done during the early '70s showed that in a year of breast-feeding they were consuming 100 to 400 times the Centers for Disease Control's estimated lifetime allowable dioxin dosage. A December 1987 study by Dr. Schecter found that the breast milk from all 50 American mothers tested in a representative sample also contained dioxin.

Dow Chemical, the major manufacturer of 2,4,5-T, maintains that dioxin formations have occurred in all combustion processes since "Prometheus stole fire from the gods and brought it to mankind." But most scientists adamantly disagree, noting that much of the man-made dioxin need not be released into the environment.

For its part, the EPA proposed in December to raise by 16-fold the daily intake of dioxin that it considers acceptable, based on a new draft study. It states that the dioxin may function as a "promoter" of other cancer-causing agents rather than being an initiator of cancerous tumors because it does not cause the mutation of animal cells.

Barry Commoner of the College for the Biology of Natural Systems at New York's Queens College finds this outrageous. "In fact, what dioxin does is enormously stimulate an enzyme that converts environmental compounds into active carcinogens, making the body much more vulnerable. The latest EPA risk assessments have nothing to do with science."

—D.R.

hadn't been manufactured for years.

Since the early '80s officials of the state's Game and Fish Commission have periodically discovered contaminated fish in Arkansas markets. And in 1985 officials in Memphis, Tenn., complained to Arkansas officials that fish from the flood plain area reeked of chemical phenolic odors.

During the '60s, the late Dr. Rex Hancock, a dentist in Stuttgart, Ark., first began sounding the alarm about fish kills and the biological destruction of the Bayou Meto. He and some friends went to the chemical plant, then owned by Hercules, and took photographs documenting the deliberate discharge of chemicals into Rocky Branch Creek. At the time thousands of hunters and fisherman signed petitions that were presented to the governor, but the state took no action against the companies. In subsequent tests Hancock conducted with Frase in the streams around Jacksonville, minnows put in the Meto water survived no longer than two seconds. Later, Hancock, desperate for action, poured catfish juices onto the lap of an EPA hearing officer, telling him, "Oh, don't worry, it doesn't cause fertility problems."

Ralph Wiggins, a former plant engineer at Hercules who underwent triple-bypass heart surgery at age 30, recently informed the EPA about the time he became alarmed at dumping into the creek and was told by company bosses to remove all containers marked Hercules because "we don't want a big fish kill and be responsible for it." But the fish kill happened anyway.

Fish haven't been the only casualties. In 1985 plant worker James Cox died shortly after toxic chemicals accidentally splashed on him. Paul Koros, a fire department paramedic, tried to revive him and also suffered chemical poisoning. Koros, now 24, suffers recurring seizures and shows signs of leukemia. While his \$800,000 negligence suit against Vertac is still pending, the Arkansas Fire and Police Pension Review Board denied Koros' requested disability benefits in December, when its physician stipulated that dioxin poisoning could not be proven.

**Welcome to cancer alley:** In the neighborhood bordering the Vertac facility, just around the corner from a nursing home and a hospital, not a soul seems to be stirring. The air is still, but eyes are burning. "Your ears will ring after a little while," says Jack Park, a 23-year resident now in his early 60s. Park, who worked at the plant when it was owned by Reasor-Hill and who headed the laboratory under Hercules, maintains that some chemicals used to make Agent Orange were brought to Jacksonville in bulk. He says some came from Hooker Chemical in New York, the company responsible for Love Canal.

"We brought tetrachlorobenzene from Hooker by the train carload," he says. The toxic chemical was later found in fish along the local flood plain.

A few years ago Park suffered a stroke. "This is cancer alley," he says matter-of-factly. "My next-door neighbor is dying of liver cancer right now. When some of us got tested by Dr. Aubrey Worrell in Pine Bluff, I had the honor of having the highest levels of chemicals in my blood. I got a petition drawn up by a lawyer friend asking for a health evaluation door-to-door. That was 10 years ago. It's never happened."

Hobbling outside with his cane, Park points out the spots where hydrochloric acid





Patty Frase (pictured here addressing members of environmental groups): "Just don't touch the food, drink the water or even wash your hands in Jacksonville."

has eaten away the cement in his driveway. "For every pound of herbicide, the plant used a pound of hydrochloric acid. It came in by the carload." He picks up a grape plant, gnarled and twisted with mutation, and shakes his head.

Mozelle Bergschneider, 71, has lived two blocks from the plant since 1946. She has conducted her own survey within a four-block radius of her home. On her list of 50 deaths in recent years, she says most of these were cancer victims. Another 17 people, she says, are undergoing chemotherapy or other cancer treatment programs. Since no state or federal study of the area's cancer rate has ever been conducted, residents are the only monitors.

Bergschneider tells of running her tongue around her mouth certain mornings and finding a sweet taste. "That's dioxin," she says. "The problem is we have smelled it for so long that our olfactory nerves are about gone. This is a dead town, not fit for human habitation, or animal. But I have no place else to go. That's true for 99 percent of the people here."

A few miles from the Vertac facility, sandwiched in among a rural neighborhood of homes, are the Graham Road and Rogers Road dump-sites. Although both Hercules and Vertac officials have denied under oath that any of their products ended up at the two landfills, some of the same wastes buried at the plant site were found by the EPA at both, including open drums. The EPA estimates that more than 1,000 barrels were discarded at the landfills over the years. Dioxin, herbicides, PCBs and numerous other chemicals have been detected in the soil.

The EPA also reported finding one form of dioxin in a family's tap water, and two different forms in a municipal well near the

dumps. But the agency later said these results were mistakes, because the samples had been accidentally contaminated during laboratory analysis. According to some local residents, dioxin mixed with waste oil was sprayed on the rural roads to control dust, the same situation that forced the evacuation of Times Beach. In *These Times* was unable to confirm the spraying.

Alsie Glover, 53, lives right between the two dump-sites and raised four children there. Two of her sons bought homes nearby, before anyone knew about a contamination problem. Last August she joined about 100 other residents in suing Vertac, Hercules and the city of Jacksonville, seeking unspecified damages for property and health effects. The city was dropped from the case, Vertac settled out of court with the citizens, and on March 1 Hercules was acquitted by a jury in a Little Rock federal court.

The city owned and operated the Graham Road landfill, allowing the dumping of hazardous chemicals until 1973, when the state ordered it closed because of the high water table and poor drainage.

**Nowhere to go:** Now the EPA, which finally added both dump-sites to the Superfund cleanup list last summer, is paying a visit. Three women from the agency's Dallas regional office sit around Glover's kitchen table, seeking to determine the extent of the damage.

A few years back, Glover recalls being told by another EPA official, "If I were you, I'd get my family out of here." But she told him she couldn't afford to move. Before the city dug ditches last year, water from the creek below the Rogers Road landfill would stand in her yard for a week or two at a time.

"It would flood over the barrels," Glover says. "We didn't know for years they had

anything bad in them. I'd pay the city man who ran the site \$2 apiece for them to burn trash in. So did a lot of people.

"Several times I got just deathly sick," she continues. "One time you'd turn your faucet on and it'd stink so bad you couldn't stay in the kitchen. Wasn't no such thing as opening up your house in summertime, because of the odors. The cinders from burning the trash down there would be all over the car. When they finally closed the dump, they had the pigpen right there."

The EPA officials do not follow up Glover's last statement. Yet in June of 1985 another EPA crew had discovered some pigpens sitting where the waste was once burned. The pigs had been contracted out to a local farmer to raise by the Tyson Chicken company, one of the largest poultry producers in the world, based in Springdale, Ark. The pigs, which wallowed regularly amid the toxic barrels, were eventually sold to slaughterhouses for market, "going into," as Frase puts it, "your TV dinners or bacon."

She adds, "The state was talking about giving the farmers compensation for their contaminated pigs long before they told people not to eat from their gardens or let their children play outside there."

Despite a letter Glover received from the state Health Department warning that her well water was unfit to drink, the Jacksonville City Council balked for months at pumping a public water supply to the area. Now that residents have finally received city water, their water bills run as high as \$90 a month, far beyond what most Jacksonville families can afford.

When Glover asks the EPA representatives if they'd like to take a drive through the neighborhood, they reluctantly agree.

What they witness is a house-to-house chronicle of disease—from allergies and respiratory problems, to cancer and heart disease, both of which have affected numerous people before they reach 50. Glover does not wish to talk about her own health problems, only the allergy shots that her daughter-in-law and little granddaughter must take weekly.

In a 1985 report about the dump-sites, the EPA noted that "seven dead dogs were found in the two drainage ditches" and "it appeared that children had played there quite extensively."

It is, beyond a doubt, the children of Jacksonville who have suffered the most. An informal survey taken in 1985 by the *Arkansas Democrat* of children living in close proximity to the dump-sites (most of whom attended an elementary school in the same area) found 10 of 18 with serious health problems, including spina bifida (fluid on the brain), seizures, an infant with a hole between the chambers of the heart and a baby born with part of her brain outside the skull. While no direct link to dioxin could be established, some state health officials told the *Democrat* that the unusual situation merited further study.

Some of Jacksonville's children never survive at all. "This is one of the most serious public health disasters in the United States," says Adrienne Anderson, western director of the National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards. "The number of mysterious SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) deaths is horrifying."

Residents refer to a section of a local cemetery as "babyland," where babies under six months old whose parents can't afford

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to bury them in family plots can be interred at no cost. Of nine babies known to be buried here, seven died in 1985. One of them was three-month-old Joseph Shelton, whose mother had grown up near the dump-sites and whose family was then living a few blocks away. The story of events following this infant's death paint a still-larger picture of governmental indifference, even cover-up. **Ignoring the evidence:** On Sept. 6, 1985, after the then-healthy Shelton baby received a 2 a.m. bottle feeding, the young parents awoke to find him dead in his crib. A week later another child, 17-month-old Jeff Shelton, began having seizures and was rushed to the hospital. The director of pediatric neurology at Arkansas' Children's Hospital, Dr. Robert Woody, suspected something unusual after an intern ruled out spinal meningitis.

Hospital tests on Jeff seemed to reveal the existence of a high-level chlorophenol chemical in his blood. The physicians then closely examined tissues from an autopsy that had already been performed on Joseph, a standard Arkansas practice for SIDS deaths. Dr. Marge Brewster, who heads the hospital's Metabolic Laboratory and is in charge of Arkansas' Reproductive Health Monitoring System, then contacted the Enviro-Health Systems laboratory of Richardson, Texas, one of the few private labs in the U.S. that is equipped to do further testing. As a favor, it agreed to do an unusual assay (analysis) of the deceased child's liver and kidneys, looking for specific toxic chemicals.

"Part of what we asked for," says Dr. Brewster, "was an assay for chlorophenols, thinking that those being released at the time through the Jacksonville sewer system could potentially be volatilized and available for

exposure."

In December the hospital received the test results. Levels ranging as high as 508 parts per billion of six chlorophenols—the class of chemicals used in the manufacturing of 2,4,5-T, 2,4-D, 2,4-DB and Silvex herbicides—were found in the Shelton baby. At least three of them were known to cause cancer in lab animals, and one was a mutagen that alters cells' genetic material. Dr. Woody told the *Arkansas Democrat* that the amounts were "above usual levels for urban adults," adding that there are no "normal" levels of such chemicals in the blood. Other chemicals, phenoxy herbicides, were also found in two urine samples taken from the mother, 19-year-old Brenda.

"We then requested that the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta utilize the other half of [Joseph's] tissue we had stored to repeat the assay," Brewster says. "At the time we had stored approximately 100 other babies' tissues from SIDS deaths that could have been assayed simultaneously."

When the story broke in the *Arkansas Democrat*, citizens began to demand some answers from state officials. At one gathering state epidemiologist Dr. Tom McChesney, a retired Air Force veterinarian, commented that the autopsy findings had been "prematurely released" and that it was "most difficult to assess what they mean," noting they were being sent on to the CDC. He then suggested the chemicals may have come from herbicides sprayed around the Shelton home.

At another meeting of the city's sewer commissioners, Frase remembers, "Somebody had the audacity to say, 'I wonder if she was bathing that baby in Lysol,' and they all had a big chuckle about it. This woman might be poor and uneducated, but she's not

gonna bathe her baby in Lysol."

All the Sheltons' could figure was that the chemicals might have gotten into Joseph's body from the water that was mixed with his formula. Or, as Dr. Brewster suspected, they could easily have been passed on during pregnancy.

A Vertac spokesperson, however, says the baby's death was more likely caused by burning treated wood in the family's woodstove or by pesticide traces state inspectors detected around the kitchen sink.

"After quite some time," says Dr. Brewster, "the final answer we got from the CDC was that no, they would not re-assay the tissues or anybody else's either. The reason they gave me was that they had sent an investigator and were not pleased with the quality control at the Texas lab." Besides, said the CDC, their scientists had researched medical literature and had found no record of chlorophenols ever showing up in human liver and kidney tissues.

Asked why the CDC wouldn't pursue it anyway, Brewster replies, "I was very disappointed at their approach. CDC has billed itself as being the nation's public health laboratory, and with a question of this type, it's really the only resource we have to go to for an answer. I thought we had all the material they needed to get some very definitive answers, and their excuse doesn't make any sense to me."

The ultimate decision, Brewster says, came from Dr. Vernon Houk, director of the CDC's Center for Environmental Health. Explaining that decision Dr. Houk says, "The [Texas] lab is lousy. Their quality control is not sufficient for them to do the things they say they can. Any lab testing parts per billion in autopsy materials that have been preserved in formalin is not worthy of being

called a lab."

Dr. John Lasiter, director of the Texas laboratory, would not comment on the controversy, saying only that his lab is CDC certified and that it is a "political situation." Lasiter has served on the EPA's Science Advisory Board longer than any current member.

Asked why the CDC didn't do its own testing on the Shelton baby, Houk replies: "Well, what are you going to test? You cannot test the tissues because once they have been in formalin, no one knows what the impurities in the formalin are when you're talking about low parts per billion. Like in the early days of Legionnaire's Disease, before we knew what it was, there was a lot of speculation because there were trace amounts of nickel in the autopsy tissues. Well, the source was really nickel plating of the autopsy instruments."

As for dioxin contamination, Dr. Houk adds, "Our concern about the human health effects of chronic low-dose exposure are much less than they were in 1980. We have gotten a lot of information that appears that humans are not as sensitive to dioxin as the most sensitive laboratory animal. Everybody in this country has TCDD in their body, up to 18 parts per trillion measured in fat. It is no cause for alarm."

Dr. Brewster, asked whether she believed the CDC simply didn't want to create a stir over the Shelton baby incident, comments: "I think in general the CDC's attitude with regard to these toxics questions is one of skepticism. They tend to wait until there's ample evidence of a problem before bringing any big guns to bear upon it. That places people in the situation of gathering their own evidence, before the best set of expertise gets into the picture at all."

Back in 1983 Arkansas' health department director, Dr. Ben Saltzman, had requested federal help after citizens complained about ill health. The CDC had agreed to analyze data on Jacksonville chemicals. Up to that point, the only other tests had been conducted on 55 former workers at the chemical plant by the Mount Sinai Medical Center, which found "effects of unknown significance" on nerve conduction in 46 percent of them. Blood, fat tissue and urine samples were sent back to New York, but test results never came back. Arkansas itself doesn't even have a statistical cancer registry, which can help a state identify unusual cancer clusters in specific areas.

**A CDC cover-up?** Even prior to the Shelton baby incident, the CDC had hedged. Despite a state recommendation that all toxics be considered in the CDC's investigation, the CDC examined only the EPA's measured environmental dioxin levels in Jacksonville. Then in July of 1985 the CDC decided not to undertake a fatty-tissue study of residents. Their reasoning, which was contradicted by EPA studies, was that Jacksonville's dioxin problem was not as bad as Times Beach's.

After the CDC turned down further testing of the Shelton baby, Dr. Brewster personally contacted four EPA/CDC labs. Each of them also turned her down. Finally, a California lab said it would examine 10 unlabeled baby assays, including the Shelton's, for a \$10,000 fee.

In the interim, according to Brewster, the other 100 tissue samples of SIDS victims being preserved by Children's Hospital were thrown out, apparently by accident, by a morgue attendant. "I feel now that I should have gathered them in a safe," she says.

## Jacksonville's dioxin disaster: a chronology

**1946**—The World War II Arkansas Ordnance Works is sold by the federal government to Reasor-Hill Chemical Corporation, which begins to formulate the insecticides DDT, aldrin, dieldrin, toxaphene and others. Drums of wastes are stacked in an open field near the operations area.

**1957**—Reasor-Hill starts production of the subsequently banned herbicide 2,4,5-T, in addition to its other chemicals including the herbicides 2,4-D and Silvex. More drums are added to the field and untreated waste water is discharged from the plant, where it runs downhill into Rocky Branch Creek.

**1961**—The plant is acquired by the Hercules chemical company. The old waste drums are buried in the same area. Hercules adds chlordane to its chemical repertoire and discharges processed waste water into the creek.

**1967-68**—Hercules manufactures the defoliant Agent Orange for shipment to Vietnam.

**1972**—Hercules leases the plant to Transvaal, Inc. Herbicide production, halted briefly in 1971, resumes. Burial of drums of concentrated waste continues until 1974.

**1976**—Transvaal and four other companies merge into Vertac.

**1978**—Vertac companies are under protection of the federal court during bankruptcy procedures. The company is brought out of bankruptcy by new own-

ers, through a Panamanian holding company.

**1979**—It becomes publicly known that the plant is contaminated by dioxin. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports finding leaking wastes containing up to 40 parts per million of dioxin. Rocky Branch Creek, Jacksonville's Lake Dupree and the Bayou Meto are quarantined. Vertac ceases 2,4,5-T production voluntarily.

**1980**—The EPA and Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology sue Vertac and Hercules, and a federal court orders cleanup of both the plant and off-site contamination.

**1982**—The chemical plant site is placed 18th on the EPA's national "Superfund" cleanup list. Negotiations continue among state, federal government and chemical companies on the cleanup plan.

**1983**—The Arkansas health director asks for EPA help after citizens complain about ill health. The Centers for Disease Control agree to analyze existing data on chemical pollution in Jacksonville. A multi-million-dollar consolidated lawsuit is filed by citizens against Hercules and Vertac. A former Hercules worker identifies the old Jacksonville city dump as an area where wastes from the plant were buried.

**1984**—The EPA releases a report stating hazardous waste contamination poses a continuing health danger to the area. Vertac, Hercules and the state fight the EPA, seeking to reduce a \$20 million cleanup plan to \$2 million. A federal court judge

rules in favor of the less costly plan.

**1985**—A Vertac worker is killed when less than a gallon of a chemical mixture spills on him. A three-month-old baby dies of apparent chemical contamination. Vertac and the state announce plans for an Arkansas company, Ensco, to incinerate the leaking waste barrels on-site. Citizen protests ensue. Another ex-plant worker identifies a landfill as an area where plant wastes were buried.

**1986**—The EPA announces a cleanup plan for off-site contaminated areas, including waterways, flood plains and the city sewer systems, with cost estimates ranging as high as \$380 million. Dioxin contamination is found in Arkansas wood ducks. The citizens' lawsuit against Vertac is settled out of court. Vertac ceases production of 2,4-D and shuts down the plant.

**1987**—Vertac transfers its assets to a new corporation, pays off a debt to Dow Chemical, and leaves Arkansas and cleanup responsibilities behind. The federal government and the state take Vertac to court for fraud, naming Dow in the suit. More than 100 residents near two dump-sites added to the EPA's Superfund list file suit against Jacksonville and the chemical companies in federal court, seeking damages and city water supplies. International Technologies, Inc., of California is selected to incinerate the Vertac wastes on-site.

—D.R.



Finally, under prodding from Arkansas doctors and health officials, the CDC did agree to do a study to gauge children's exposure level to chemicals, using "control groups" of 100 children from Jacksonville and Conway, a town 30 miles away. The study did not show substantially higher levels of chlorophenols in the Jacksonville children, although some doctors questioned the wisdom of comparing samples from communities in such close proximity.

Brewster then asked state health officials if they could obtain the CDC's samples from the urine of the Jacksonville children, but her request was denied. "The reason given by the CDC was that the remaining volumes of urine were too small to test," Brewster says. Frase's group contacted the CDC and asked officials to comply. But the CDC and the state Health Department refused a second time, because, according to Frase, "they didn't want Children's Hospital doing quality control on its own."

"I worry a lot about exposure to chemicals in the environment, because I think it's quite large," concludes Dr. Brewster. "The dioxin issue is the unknown, and is extremely difficult to test for. We need more studies of exposure that might affect the immune system, better epidemiological studies of health effects and more work on analyzing low-dose exposure to environmental chemicals. But it could all be resolved if the money, and the politics, were there to resolve it."

Dr. Paul Connett, a biochemist at New York's St. Lawrence University and founder of the organization Work on Waste, is convinced after a visit to Jacksonville that "politics" explains why the CDC called off further investigation into the sudden, inexplicable death of the Shelton baby.

"I'm sure someone told them it's a bombshell," says Connett. "Because one of the claims that the industry always makes is that no one has ever died from dioxin or related chemicals. And once that can be shown, it's a whole different ball game—for the Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange and many other people."

**"I ain't gonna let up":** Jeff Shelton, the father of Joseph and Jeff, sits at a kitchen table inside his small trailer. Jeff Jr., now three, is on medication to control his seizures. A five-month-old daughter is on a heart monitor, just in case.

Rubbing a hand over his eyes, the father says, "There was a baby died a few houses down from where ours did, a couple months after we moved. Started having breathing problems, and by the time they got him to Children's, he was dead. But they haven't wanted to get into all this."

"I protested, went to the governor's office and did some things I regret," he continues. "There was a time I took a coffin up there, to make a statement. I had been trying to get ahold of Governor Clinton a long time, and was getting ducked. I'd call and they'd say he was busy with his campaign. So this was the only way I could figure to get their attention. It really tore me up inside. My intention was to follow him around his campaign trail. Some of my family agreed with it, some didn't, so I never did. The governor's staff told reporters they hadn't forgotten, and would let us know as soon as they investigated more. That was two years ago."

Shelton plans to return soon to his hometown in Indiana, where an uncle says he'll hook him up with some attorneys. "I ain't gonna let up," he says. "One of these days maybe I'll be able to lay my head down and

think I did something to help somebody else. Twenty years ago if they had dealt with this problem, fact is my son might be with us today and maybe I'd have some healthy children."

He pauses a moment, this man who paints satellite dishes for a living and never had much formal education, and says: "Our government, back in the '60s, these companies made the Agent Orange for 'em. I figure that's probably got a lot to do with us having a hard time. That's the Pentagon. That's where the power's at."

**Pentagon keeps its distance:** For 20 years, the Little Rock Air Force Base was the military's primary location for Titan II missiles, which were recently dismantled there. Outside of the state government, the base is the largest employer in Arkansas, which "competes" with Mississippi for the dubious distinction of having the highest illiteracy rate and lowest income level in the U.S. And



The EPA sent a team of workers in "moon suits" to clean up the Vertac site.

the base is a plum that neither Arkansas officials nor the Pentagon wants to see jeopardized.

Some of the base property was originally donated by Reasor-Hill Chemical, the predecessor of Hercules and Vertac. Mystery continues to shroud the relationship between the base and Hercules' contract with the government to manufacture Agent Orange. The military used C-130 cargo planes to transport the defoliant overseas. The base is still the country's main training center for C-130 pilots, but the military maintains that none of the planes based in Arkansas were used to ship Agent Orange. One reporter was told that the cargo planes didn't even arrive on the base until 1971.

But Frase, who was living there when her father served as acting base commander in 1969, insists she saw C-130s at the time and wonders "why they're denying those planes were here for those couple of years." She says base engineers told her that they tested bay and cargo areas of some of the planes and found them highly contaminated.

The Pentagon appears intent on keeping its distance from Arkansas' dioxin controversy. Late in 1985 Arkansas Rep. Tommy Robinson, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, asked the military to take charge of Vertac's contaminated barrels and dispose of them at Arkansas' Pine Bluff Arsenal. Robinson insisted that since much of the problem resulted from the military's Agent Orange contract with Hercules, they bore equal responsibility.

In a letter to Robinson dated December 13, 1985, then-Defense Secretary Caspar

Weinberger personally responded: "For DoD [Department of Defense] to take on the disposal responsibility for private sector wastes would simply impose on DoD someone else's responsibility to satisfy permitting requirements and conditions for protection of the environment." Besides, Weinberger added, Pine Bluff wasn't technically equipped to handle highly toxic dioxin.

Robinson followed up by saying he would seek an amendment to a Defense appropriations bill to rescind a federal regulation that banned the military from assuming any responsibility for civilian-produced waste. Adding that he intended to raise questions at hearings of the Veteran's Affairs Committee, Robinson said, "This will allow me to open a Pandora's box about Agent Orange."

But Robinson never pursued the matter further. The congressman is now pushing for mobile-based MX missiles on railroad cars to be stationed at the base.

**Kept in the dark:** Questions remain, however, especially about possible large-scale chemical contamination on the base.

Max Pierce, now 55 and burdened with health problems, was employed during the early '50s by Reasor-Hill Chemical. "At one time there were two plants," says Pierce, "and one was located about where the PX, the commissary and the NCO club are now. We used to get cars full of barrels of toxaphene. It was nothing just to lay 'em on the ground and chop 'em up. Wherever you found a spot you just dumped. Those barrels were taken around different places where the base is—2,4-D, cotton dust, dieldrin, all different types of chemicals. Who thought back then that this stuff could get into the groundwater and be a problem for people?"

Pierce says he believes much of the waste ran off into the nearby creek and probably into a lake on the base. "I'm sure if the EPA or the state did some tests, they'd find foreign substances still in the soil. If I was on that air base and shopping in the commissary or the PX, it'd kinda make me wonder what lies under that ground."

The DoD has tested for some chemicals on the base, but Frase and others say they never looked in the right places. A pilot still on duty there, who requested anonymity, says he's heard rumors of more toxics being buried under the base golf course.

For years military personnel were kept in the dark about the situation. Recently, however, due to escalating local pressure, the base's public affairs office assigned someone to assemble a one-page briefing sheet. He was told to contact the EPA, the state pollution agency and the Chamber-sponsored Jacksonville People With Pride.

"I think the fact sheet is being put together because the criticism could easily be made that the Air Force has done absolutely nothing to inform its people of the problem there," says the pilot. "A lot of men have come and gone, and never knew they were exposed to anything. Now the base is gonna say that the bad news is that you don't want to get a house real close to certain areas, but the good news is that the EPA is gonna come in and fix everything. Their shield is this huge government agency we can supposedly rely on called the EPA. The commanders won't say anything where they could get criticized from the boys downtown, the local Chamber or the real estate people or the mayor. Now when a reporter calls, they can say a highly qualified officer looked into the problem and put together this brief-

ing for everybody on the base. In fact, it's a half-truth. But that's the way the military is."

A healthy 25-year-old first lieutenant in his squadron died in the early '80s, according to the pilot. "They sent him off to the VA Regional Center, and nobody knew. They never did tell us exactly what happened to him, other than he apparently got cancer of the liver, like a lot of people in this town."

Frase says, "I know that a lot of military men [at the base] who've taken ill have been sent to Pennsylvania to be treated. They die there, but the death certificate never reads Little Rock Air Force Base."

A physician at Little Rock's Veterans Administration Medical Center responds, "If anything like that is going on, I've seen no evidence of it. The base does air-evacuate a certain proportion of people who need surgery, which we don't have here, to major 'teaching hospital' military centers in Texas." The physician says he has not noticed any unusual rate of cancers that might be associated with toxic chemicals, but adds that the base has a relatively young population.

Yet when a woman whose husband was on active duty in Jacksonville began raising questions about contamination at the base, a transfer came through to a base in Minot, N.D. "They were continually harassed by the military," says Anderson of the National Campaign Against Toxic Hazards. "We have documentation of other families who have since left the base, been harassed, and who have not been given proper medical support despite their clearly documented contamination."

Frase says that "no people should be allowed to come to the base and expose their families at the rate the government is bringing them in. There are dump-sites on the base that need remedial action immediately."

According to a source on the base and other residents, the Air Force has quietly taken a few other steps. No longer will the local Veterans Administration (VA) approve loans on homes in particular areas near the plant. But few personnel ask too many questions when they are able to purchase a \$100,000 home for \$35,000. A VA spokesperson denies both allegations.

When in 1984 Frase discussed the base situation with an aide to Sen. Edward Kennedy in Washington, the staffer finally threw up his hands. "If they announced there were problems," he said, "the military would have to pay those men hazard pay for just being there. No way. The government will do anything to protect it, and so will the state of Arkansas."

**"Played for fools":** As the sun sets over Jacksonville, Frase maneuvers her car onto the highway heading home. Shaking her head, she says softly, "Most people in this community, with all their money tied up in their homes and children, don't want to believe that everything they've worked for might be useless. We are played for fools here, but these people have no outlet. In all these years, the EPA has agreed to hold only one public hearing. But after all, who are you going to believe? A bunch of yelling housewives, or the EPA, the CDC and the Department of Defense?"

**Dick Russell** is a freelance writer whose environmental reporting regularly appears in national publications.

(Next week: The cover-up in Jacksonville, and Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton's pellmell rush to "burn the evidence.")



# EDITORIAL

Chicago Tribune



Some Red in the Rainbow.

## In race relations there's another flower blooming

In January Thurston Little, one of 11 children born to a white sharecropper in northeastern Mississippi, and now the owner of a local pipe manufacturing firm, held a fund-raiser for Jesse Jackson in Corinth, Miss. "I feel like he's the black George Wallace of the South," Little says. "He stirs up the same emotion in people that Wallace did. There's something missing out there. People are looking for something new. Poor people, they don't care what it is, they're looking for something to help them."

This is what Jackson calls the other side of race relations. Violence in New York's Howard Beach or Georgia's Forsyth County grabs the headlines, as indeed it must, he says. "But there's something else going on. There's another flower blooming." And events of the past few weeks confirm what he says. In three northern states with tiny minority populations—Minnesota, Maine and Vermont—Jackson ran second and averaged 25 percent of the vote in primaries or caucuses. And, Little predicted, "He's gonna be hell in the South. You can get ready for that."

Much of America's growth has been built on racial exploitation—

of Native Americans in our continental expansion, of blacks in southern slavery, of Asians and Hispanics in the building of the West. The United States is a society shot through with racism, which has been a major element in the success of American capitalism, just as it has been a hindrance for the left. Yet we have also evolved, especially since World War II, as a nation uniquely diverse, ethnically and racially, and with an increasing commitment, both in rhetoric and reality, to equality.

Four years ago, when Jackson almost literally forced his way into the 1984 presidential contest, few whites could imagine him—or any black—to be a serious candidate. But since then he has been changing that. Few Southern whites will say flat-out that they support Jackson, but many now take him seriously. When asked if race would matter in making a decision about his candidacy, one North Carolina bus driver said, "Don't matter to me. I drive a handicapped bus with all races and we are all equal. My Bible tells me that's the way we're supposed to live." And at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va., Jackson was greeted with a roaring ovation from 400 students, almost all of them white. One said he "conveys a sense of warmth, like he's one of us. One of the people.... I've definitely changed my opinion of Jackson. He's in the running now." In large part, Jackson's standing in the polls reflects the state of American race relations. He has the highest overall positives and the highest negatives. But the positives are growing and the negatives shrinking.

## Administration inches out of mental gridlock

As we observed two weeks ago, the only solution to the crisis in the Mideast is through an international conference, including both the United States and the Soviet Union, at which the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) would represent the Palestinian people. This view, which we have proposed from time to time for the past decade, now seems to be forcing its way into the agenda of the Reagan administration, thanks to the recent activities of Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza.

All parties to the conflict, except for Israeli officials, see the handwriting on the wall. Last week Jordan's King Hussein echoed the Arab nations' desire for a conference attended by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and the PLO. In response, Secretary of State George Shultz is reported to have had a "new idea"—a conference at which the United States and the Soviet Union would preside, with the three other permanent members of the Security Council—China, Britain and France—serving as observers. A PLO role was implicit, prompting an Israeli official to report that Shultz had to wring a "reluctant agreement" from Prime Minister Yitzhak

Shamir. Reluctant, the official explained, because Shamir may now find it difficult to reject "the rest of the proposed package."

But that won't stop Shamir and others from trying. As the English language Israeli magazine *New Outlook* commented in its February issue, Israeli politicians who claim they are ready for a political solution, yet "refuse to recognize the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination," are wasting time in "cunning maneuvers looking for an alternative to the legitimate Palestinian leadership, namely, the PLO."

But the only alternative is mental gridlock. This was demonstrated by the *New York Times*, which fretted on March 2 that "no serious Mideast talks can be held without PLO participation in some fashion," adding quickly that because "the PLO has never stated unequivocally its willingness to coexist with Israel," neither the United States nor Israel can negotiate with it. So the "only sensible course" is to refuse to deal with the PLO "unless it changes its charter and clearly accepts peace with Israel."

In other words, the *Times* and many others are saying, what must be negotiated has to be settled before negotiations can begin. This would indeed be a "cunning maneuver," if it were not so transparently ludicrous. As the *Times* itself notes in the same editorial, Palestinian "independence from the PLO is a fiction, but a useful one." A fiction, yes. Useful? Only to those who prefer continued war to peace and security in the Mideast. Fortunately, the administration seems to be inching away from this position.

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# LETTERS

## Speak out

FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE DEPLORED THE EROSION of Israel's early ideals since 1967 the events in Gaza and the West Bank of the last two months seem not so much a new policy as the inevitable outcome of an ongoing one. And yet the demonstrations by thousands of Israeli Jews calling for a political solution to the Palestinian problem and an end to the brutality is heartening, as was the peaceful demonstration by Israeli Arabs. That they remain peaceful is surely partly to the credit of people like the Israeli colonel Ron Trainin (*JTT*, Jan. 13). Givat Haviva Institute, which he heads in his civilian role, has worked ceaselessly for Jewish-Arab rapprochement within Israel's borders as well as with its Arab neighbors outside. A score of other groups, newer and smaller, has added to their efforts.

At this point, American Jews must speak out against this Israeli policy. To remain silent suggests condonation of the brutality—a repugnant idea. But criticism is not enough. In the same way that we support the democratic forces in Chile or South Africa, so must we support those in Israel who are struggling there to bring about changes in policy which will enable Arab and Jew to live together in peace.

Lucille R. Perlman  
Chair, Givat Haviva Educational Foundation  
New York

## Let 'em have Jordan!

YOU PICTURE ISRAEL AS THE OPPRESSOR OF THE Palestinians and erroneously compare Israel to South Africa. Look at the facts and the recent CBS-TV documentary "48 Hours." One can then conclude that:

1. The Palestinians are victims of their Arab brethren who denied them their state, which is Jordan. Jordan grabbed 80 percent of the planned U.N. Palestinian state in 1948.

2. There was a population exchange; initially 750,000 Palestinians left Palestine during Israel's war of independence, while seven Arab states tried to destroy Israel. The Arab nations expelled about an equal number of Jews that were resettled by Israel. The Palestinian Arabs were left to rot in refugee camps to be used as pawns in the Arab war against Israel.

3. The blacks in South Africa want their democratic rights and to live peacefully and to co-exist with whites in South Africa, which we should support. The Palestinian Arabs and the PLO want nothing less than to destroy Israel. This was clearly stated by several Palestinian leaders in the CBS-TV "48 Hours" documentary.

4. Palestinian Arabs do deserve a state of their own; let them reclaim what was stolen from them. That Palestinian state whose population is 70 percent Palestinian is Jordan.

Jack D. Lauber  
Latham, N.Y.

## Not enough

AFTER ALL OF THE RECENT VICIOUSNESS BY THE Israeli regime against the Palestinian people I am pleased that *In These Times* calls for making U.S. aid to Israel contingent on the recognition of Palestinian national and human rights (*JTT*, Feb. 24). It should be obvious to everyone that Zionism is a discriminatory and violent system that is coming more and more to openly resemble

the apartheid regime of white South Africa. This, of course, was inherent in the original project of Zionism, which was to somehow provide a solution to the problem of anti-Semitism by establishing an exclusively or predominantly Jewish state in a country that was overwhelmingly Arab. This could only be accomplished by force of arms, first with the sponsorship of the British and later the Americans, and the violence continues to this day.

It is not enough, however, to deplore Israeli repression and wish that the United States wasn't bankrolling it. If we are not going to be witness to further tragedies and catastrophes arising out of this conflict then we must place this issue in the forefront of the peace movement's agenda. Last year, the organizers of the April march on Washington (with the help of the pro-Zionist trade union bureaucracy) conspired to prevent the movement from addressing the Middle East conflict in general and the Palestinian question in particular. Let us hope that the recent events have convinced many that this issue cannot be ignored, and that the peace movement must take a clear stand on behalf of Palestinian national and human rights.

David Langlois Williams  
Chicago, IL

## Ideals? In Israel?

YOUR EDITORIAL ON PALESTINIAN UNREST WAS good up until the part about Israel's "founding ideals." What ideals are you talking about? The racist ideal that Jews are superior to Arabs because Jews are "the chosen people?" The biblical ideal that Jews should live in Israel because God gave that land to them in the Bible? The U.S. military ideal that Israel was of strategic importance to give us needed access to Russia and the oil fields? Aren't you just brimming over with idealism? Anyone whose eyes are not clouded with idealism can see that the terrorist state of Israel and its friend and protector the United States are just getting the public humiliation they deserve.

Carol Bachelder  
Boise, Idaho

## Beyond the pale?

WHAT DO *IN THESE TIMES* ISRAEL CORRESPONDENT Hillel Schenker and Kibbutz Beit Alfa, which manufactures an armored water cannon designed for use in South Africa (now being sold to Thailand, Uruguay, France and England), have in common (*JTT*, Jan. 13)? Unfortunately, quite a bit.

Schenker is a member of the central committee of MAPAM, a somewhat left-Zionist party. And Kibbutz Beit Alfa, which sells the above-mentioned "patent on oppression,"

belongs to—you guessed it—MAPAM's kibbutz federation, Artzi.

Despite proclamations to the contrary, Kibbutz Beit Alfa continues to sell to South Africa; according to *Israeli Foreign Affairs* (January '88), "the *Financial Times* (December 22, 1987) reports that after watching the machine used on ultra-orthodox rioters in Jerusalem, 'orders have been made for the kibbutz-manufactured armored vehicles.'" Not only Israel but Schenker's "leftist" party is actively violating the international embargo on the apartheid regime.

On the other hand, what do Hillel Schenker and *In These Times*' editorial, calling for the creation of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, have in common? This time I'm afraid very little.

In an interview I conducted with Schenker in August 1986 he discussed his party's position, "What MAPAM says today is that it supports the mutual right to self-determination of both Jews, via the State of Israel, and the Palestinians, by the entity of their choice. Obviously, now, that may sound ambiguous, and the reason for that is that we as Israelis don't want to be the ones to determine for the Palestinians the nature of their national self-determination...MAPAM did say that it prefers the Jordanian-Palestinian confederation as the preferable solution...but in the final analysis, even if that is our preference the final decision is up to the Palestinians and their representatives."

Now, one need not be a political genius to figure out that MAPAM doesn't go around saying, "Yeah, well, we really would like it if the Palestinians would go for the Jordanian option, but, what the hell, if they want a state, hey, it's a free country." In Israel, the debate over the rights of the Palestinians is the continuum on which left and right are judged, and no party can possibly say that it favors non-statehood or statehood, however the Palestinians like it, negotiated by "their representatives."

If Schenker's political views and affiliations are seriously troubling, no less so are his writings. In his *In These Times* piece, Schenker states "history is always filled with surprises when it designates the narrators of its chronicles," and indeed, Hillel does surprise us with an account of Israel's brutal policy of murder and oppression in Gaza through the eyes of one of its occupation soldiers, who sees "a young [Palestinian] leadership evolving, with chaos the victor. I saw fathers and sons together, evacuating women, throwing tear gas grenades[!]" Schenker and the soldier do not see the Palestinian uprising as a positive

development, but rather a "violent and tragic impasse" for which "both Israeli and Palestinian leaders share some of the responsibility." Not to worry, "cleaner, non-lethal methods of riot control can be activated," as seen in recent days on network news: the very same armored water cannons manufactured by Schenker's Beit Alfa. And here lies the crux of the problem for *In These Times*, how one can have a progressive journalistic viewpoint from one who, more than simply belonging to the oppressing nation, endorses its ideology of domination, Zionism?

David Millstein  
Jeffrey Blankfort  
Marianne Torres  
Michael Poulin  
Oakland, California

## Palestinians

I AM SHOCKED BY THE POOR COVERAGE *IN THESE Times* is giving to the current Palestinian uprising in the Israeli Occupied Territories. Hillel Schenker's article (*JTT*, Jan. 13) would lead its readers to believe the civil war is between the Israeli right- and left-wings and the Palestinians are only minor actors in the play. Schenker says a lot about what various Israelis want to do with the territories, but says nothing about the causes of the rebellion, the repressive conditions of the occupation, the suffering of the Palestinian people, or the objectives of the revolt.

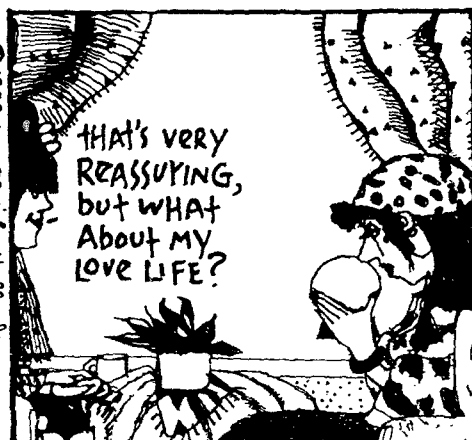
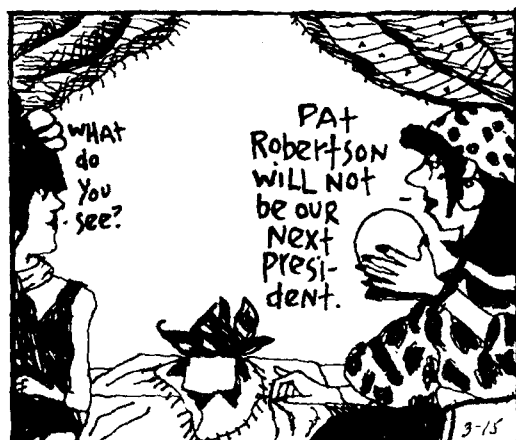
Not one Palestinian is quoted. Then as if to add insult to ignorance, *JTT* adds the cut-line: "Next week: American-Jewish response to the Palestinian uprising." Response? What about a Palestinian response? Or an American-Arab response? Would you cover a South African revolt by interviewing the white moderates, and then get a "response" from the Dutch-Reform church? How many lines of type would your reporter devote to Afrikaner pangs of conscience?

It is a disgrace to see an "alternative" newspaper skirt the issues this way. The fact is that on this issue even *The New York Times* has done a better job, publishing an Op-Ed by Edward Said on January 8, and a lot of reasonably fair-minded stuff by Anthony Lewis. Why should Alexander Cockburn have to carry all the weight at *JTT*?

Jim Haddad  
New York City

**Editor's note:** Our coverage on the ground was weak, but our editorial—also in the Jan. 13 issue—noted the conditions on the West Bank and supported Palestinian demands for a separate state, and Israeli negotiations with the PLO.

## SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander

IN THESE TIMES MARCH 9-15, 1988 15



By Joshua Henkin

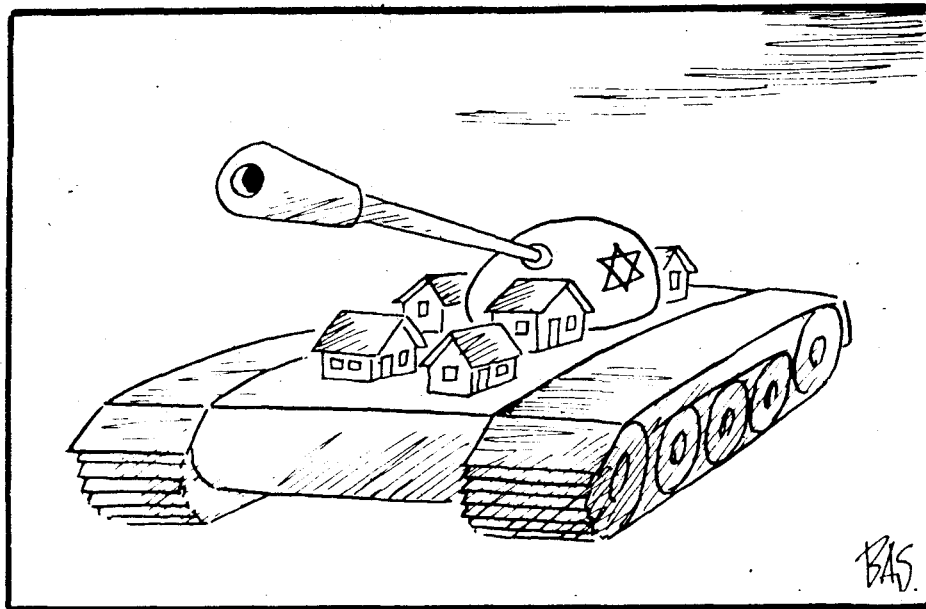
**F**OR AMERICAN JEWS LIKE MYSELF, DEEPLY committed to the state of Israel yet outraged by Israeli policies on the West Bank, these past few months have been trying. And as an editor of the only Jewish publication to call for an immediate end to the occupation and the establishment of a demilitarized Palestinian state, I find myself overcome not only by distress, but by loneliness. For if the Jewish community has traditionally agreed on anything it's that one doesn't criticize Israel in public.

The reasons for such a consensus are numerous and complicated, but nearly all of them have to do with the belief that Jews already have too many enemies to be airing their dirty laundry in public. A brief reminder that less than half a century ago one of every three of our ancestors was turned into ashes in Hitler's furnaces makes everyone but the most daring of Jews bite his tongue. The growing number of American Jews beginning to flout this tradition of silence illustrates the extent that disaffection with Israel's policies has grown. For every Jew who speaks out in public, thousands echo such sentiments in private.

**Silence isn't golden:** Ironically, most American Jews fail to understand that they cannot help but take a stand on Israel's occupation of the West Bank. Silence is impossible. In other words, American Jews are under the mistaken impression that they simply can say "we have no right to interfere in Israel's internal affairs," and allow Israel to work out its own problems.

To make such a claim is to pretend that Israel is a monolith, an indivisible entity that makes decisions without internal opposition. Nothing could be further from the truth. A sizable minority of Israelis oppose the occupation, and there is every indication that its ranks are swelling. Like all decisions made by parliamentary democracies, the continued occupation is a policy that has arisen out of heated political debate. It is impossible to say that one supports Israel on this issue, because there is no such thing as Israel's stance on the occupation. Israel is home to opponents as well as to supporters of the occupation, and failure to speak out is tantamount to endorsement of the supporters. Perhaps that is why in the current issue of *TIKKUN* Knesset member Abba Eban begs American Jews to oppose the occupation in public. He recognizes that neutrality is impossible, that silence speaks as loudly as words.

## Silence on the Palestinians supports the Israeli regime



More fundamentally, most American Jews fail to realize that failure to speak out against the occupation threatens the security of Israel. Painting a false dichotomy between the moralist and the realist, these Jews claim that Israel cannot afford to adhere to moral principles, that it has too many enemies to do anything but engage in the hardball politics of *realpolitik*.

The truth of the matter, however, is that Israel cannot afford to be immoral, that in this instance the moral and the politically expedient paths overlap. For Israel's survival depends on continued military and

economic support from the U.S. Such support allows Israel to maintain military parity with Syria, supplied by the Soviet Union.

### U.S. support of Israel is not carte blanche. It should depend on a change in policy.

Yet Israel fails to recognize that American support is not carte blanche. Arguments that the U.S. has a strategic interest in supporting Israel notwithstanding, there are many reasons for the U.S. to shift its support to some of the Arab states. American corporate interests would be greatly advanced by greater support of oil-rich Arab countries, and such interests have already proven powerful in bringing about the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia. What's more, the growing U.S. budget deficit is leading many politicians to advocate cuts of military aid to all foreign countries, Israel included. In short, strategic interests are not enough to guarantee continued American support. With U.S.-Soviet relations improving, future administrations are less likely to look at the world through the narrow lens of East-West conflict. In any case, even the most rigid Cold Warrior recognizes that the Middle East is not about to become a Soviet satellite, that Syria aside, no love is lost between most of the Arab countries, particularly those with strong fundamentalist Moslem influences, and the Soviet Union.

**Morality and security:** Ultimately, the U.S. has continued to support Israel less because of strategic interests than because Israel adheres to democratic principles. Granted, Congress and the administration have responded to lobbying pressure from American Jews, but American Jews themselves have been committed to Israel not simply because it is a place where many Jews live, but because it is a society founded upon democratic values. For the great majority of America's 6 million Jews, support for Israel has become the principal

form of Jewish identification. That this phenomenon has occurred, that Judaism has become a national religion of sorts, is possible only because Israel has been committed to worthwhile moral principles.

But if the occupation continues, if Americans continue to perceive Israel as oppressors, as beaters of civilians, then American Jews will no doubt be much more hesitant to support Israel, as will the U.S. government. That American Jewish donations to Israel have not yet decreased is not surprising. In times of crisis, communities tend to band together. But as time goes on, Israel will find itself harder pressed to gain the support of Americans, both Jewish and non-Jewish. When that happens, Israel's security will indeed be in jeopardy.

Israel would be wise to end the occupation for other reasons, too. Perhaps the most significant development of the last few months has been the fact that Palestinians living within Israel's pre-1967 borders have joined in the struggle. If these Palestinians continue to become more radical, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin may feel "compelled" to implement his "iron fist" policy not only on the West Bank but throughout Israel proper. It is perfectly conceivable that over a period of time a city such as Jerusalem could begin to take on the visage of Beirut.

Of course, one can hope that American Jews will start to criticize the occupation, not simply out of self-interest, but out of a deep moral vision. Such a vision is steeped in Jewish culture, which boasts a Bible permeated with commandments not to oppress downtrodden minorities as well as a strong prophetic tradition of moral rebuke for those who have strayed from the righteous path.

In the current issue of *TIKKUN*, Israeli peace activist Hannan Hever writes that American Jews "must regard all silence about the occupation and all support of the current Israeli regime as an attack on those of us who are fighting for a moral Israel." For Hever, Israel is not simply a plot of land, no matter how rich historically that plot of land may be. Nor is it simply a haven for Jews, no matter how successfully it has fulfilled that role. Israel is, first and foremost, a society that has committed itself to moral values. It is for such a society that Israeli boys have proved willing to die, and for such a society that American Jews ought to be fighting.

Joshua Henkin is an editor of *TIKKUN* magazine.

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Jack Amariglio, Managing Editor

a journal of political economy and social analysis



# Feel overworked? More and more Americans do

**I**NCREASING NUMBERS OF AMERICANS ARE finding themselves overworked. The hours spent earning a living seem to leave too little time for necessary domestic labor and for leisure.

A recent Harris poll found that people believe their work hours have risen 20 percent since 1973, while leisure time has fallen by 32 percent. One study found that "resting" and "relaxing" have recently become favorite leisure pursuits. While government statistics do not show any rise in the work week as officially measured, the widespread feeling of overwork picked up by the pollsters seems to have a real basis. It appears that the long historical trend in capitalist societies of a progressive reduction of the hours of work may have reversed, but in ways that do not show up readily in the statistics.

**The old overwork:** Historians have found that when capitalism first arose in Europe during the 16th century, it set in motion a gradual increase in working hours. European peasants in the late Middle Ages may have been poor and oppressed, but they did not work long hours. As the number of saints rose, the number of holidays rose accordingly, leaving fewer and fewer workdays. And the absence of any supervision left the producers to work at their own pace and intensity, which apparently was not very arduous by today's standards. Similarly, the other major group of producers, town artisans, worked neither very long nor hard, according to historians' accounts.

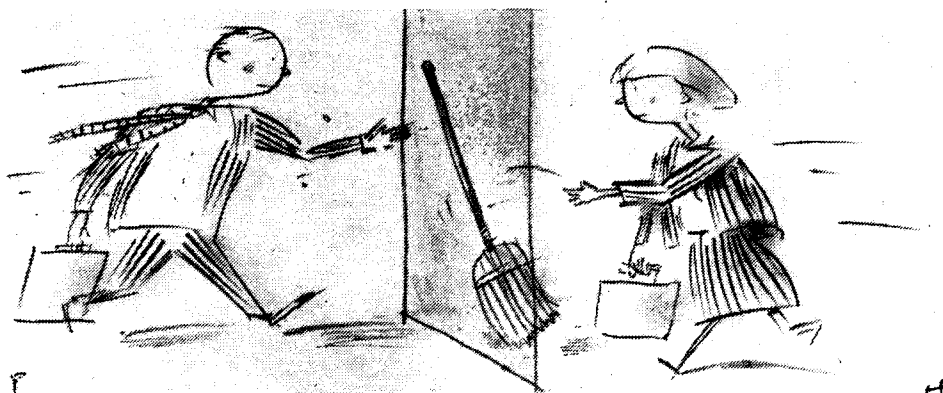
This changed dramatically as wage labor replaced independent peasant and artisan production. The new capitalist class was able to extend workers' daily labor hours and workdays per year far beyond the previous standard. In England workdays of over 12 hours became common. At the same time, the intensity of labor was greatly increased, particularly once machinery became prevalent in the 19th century. This process of extending and intensifying the labor process was fought out between capitalists and workers over several centuries. Capitalists' success in this struggle produced a growing pool of profits, as workers worked harder and longer without any significant increase in living standards. Overwork was a major means by which capitalism established itself, created great new fortunes, and financed rapid economic growth in its early phase.

**The declining workweek:** Today this is viewed as a thing of the past, a historical relic of the bad old days when capitalists got rich off the sweat of workers. And indeed, in the middle of the 19th century the tide did turn in the struggle over the workweek. Mounting massive campaigns for a reduced workweek in Europe and North America, workers succeeded in gradually reducing the hours of work.

In the U.S., the campaigns for a ten-hour day, and then an eight-hour day, eventually succeeded through a combination of legislation, union contract provisions, and a change in customary standards. The average workweek in manufacturing fell relatively steadily from 60.0 hours in 1890 to 51.0 hours in 1920 and 40.5 hours in 1950. Since the late '40s the manufacturing work-

## EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

By David Kotz



c 1988 Peter Hannan

week has fluctuated around 40 hours.

However, declining work hours did not translate into declining profits for the capitalists. By a combination of technological innovation, increased use of machinery, and rising educational levels of workers, the output of commodities per hour of labor rose rapidly enough to permit rising profits to co-exist with declining hours of work. In fact, productivity rose fast enough so that workers are able to win not only shorter hours but also rising real weekly wages. Between 1890 and 1945, real (inflation-corrected) weekly pay in manufacturing more than doubled while weekly hours fell by nearly one-third.

**Women enter the paid labor force:** Over this same period of a declining workweek, women gradually increased their participation in paid labor. In 1890 only 18.2 percent of women over 14 were in the labor force. During the next fifty years, female labor force participation grew slowly, rising by 1.5 percentage points per decade to 25.7 percent in 1940.

After 1940 a sharp break occurred in the trend, creating one of the most remarkable socioeconomic events of the postwar period. From 1940 to 1980, female labor force participation rose from about one-fourth to slightly over one-half of women over age 16, an increase of 5.6 percentage points per decade. The increase was greatest for women with small children, whose

**American capitalism, which produced high living standards and labor-saving technology, has found a new way to overwork people.**

participation rate now exceeds 50%. The increase was fastest in the '70s, rising by 8.2 percent.

What has caused the rapid entrance of women into paid labor? One might think that the introduction of household labor-saving devices, the transfer of the last stages of consumer goods processing from home to business, and the sharp reduction of the number of children born to the average woman would have drastically reduced female domestic labor hours, freeing women to work for pay. But studies show that non-employed women still put in the same number of hours of domestic labor as they used to, but that the nature of their labor has changed.

Women formerly produced goods essential to family survival: they grew food in the garden and produced household items. As capitalism took over such production,

women's household labor shifted toward what economist Marilyn Power has termed maintenance labor. That is, women became responsible for purchasing and caring for the growing stock of market-obtained consumer goods, as well as the traditional service of caring for other household members. The growing dependence on obtaining necessities in the market required more money, which tended to push women into paid work to earn the money to buy the things women had previously produced at home.

This push was accompanied by a growing pull after World War II. By the '40s American capitalism had exhausted its traditional source of additional wage labor necessary for growth: independent producers in agriculture. Since the 19th century the American countryside, and through immigration, the countryside elsewhere, had supplied new labor for capitalist expansion. By the '40s the American countryside had shrunk to a small percent of the population, while political conditions prevented immigration on a sufficient scale to meet the need. The only place where large stores of potential wage laborers could be found was in the household. Furthermore, after World War II several occupations and sectors that grew particularly rapidly were ones that had traditionally employed women, such as clerical work and the retail trade sector.

Thus, capitalism pushed and pulled women out of the home and into wage labor.

Until 1973 the average real wage rose steadily, suggesting that growing material deprivation could not explain the movement of women into wage labor. But after 1973 real wages began to fall, declining to a level 13.8 percent below the 1973 level by 1986. Growing difficulty maintaining family living standards may have been a major reason during the past 15 years.

**Effects of rising female labor force participation:** The rapid entrance of women into paid labor has had profound effects on American economic and social life. In capitalist society, working for pay brings greater power and independence than working at home and being dependent on a spouse's income for survival. Rising female paid labor undermines male dominance in the home. And it undoubtedly played a role in stimulating the rebirth of the women's movement in the late '60s. That movement, together with the growing role of women workers in the economy, led to challenges to the pervasive occupational segregation and pay discrimination that women had long faced.

The progressive developments initiated by capitalists are usually a two-edged sword. The introduction of machinery by capitalism 200 years ago promised abundance and the elimination of back-breaking

toil, yet its initial effect was to prolong the workday and drive down wages. Similarly, the recent movement of women into wage labor provides the basis for the eventual emancipation of women and the establishment of equality between the sexes. But at the same time rising female participation in paid labor underlies the problem raised at the beginning of this column: overwork.

While the paid workweek per worker has remained unchanged since 1940, the average number of paid workers per family has risen. The doubling of female labor force participation since 1940 is roughly similar to a 20 percent increase in the average family's paid workweek.

One offsetting factor is the ability when both spouses work for pay to purchase goods and services to replace domestic labor. Fast food, TV dinners and daycare are examples of such replacements. Still, one study found that employed women with children do only about 2 hours less domestic labor per day than do non-employed women with children.

Therefore, the growing participation of women in paid labor, accompanied by only a small decrease in domestic labor, means overwork for women. And to the extent that men share domestic labor with women, the overwork is shared by both spouses. Growing numbers of families find themselves stretched to the breaking point, struggling to earn the income to maintain their accustomed living standard while still fulfilling their domestic responsibilities.

It is ironic that, even in the stage of capitalism that has produced high living standards and that continually introduces new labor-saving technologies, the system has found a new way to overwork people. ■

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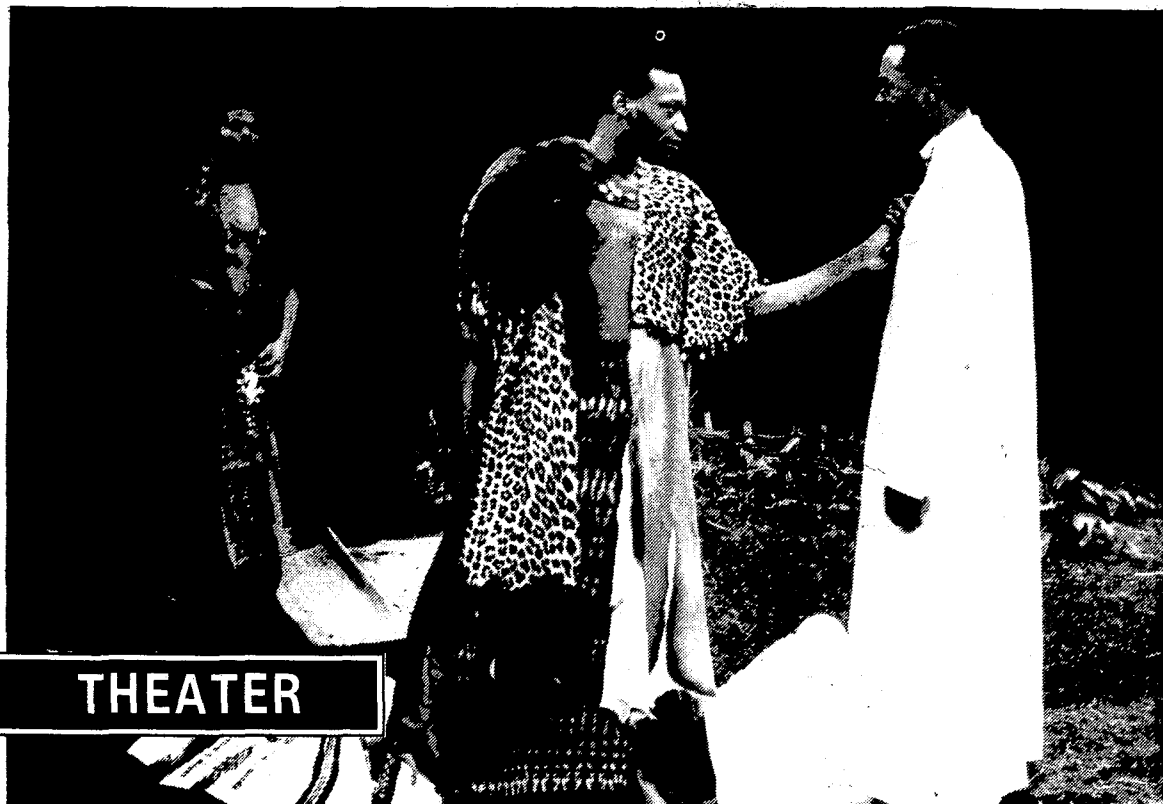
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## THEATER

Jeffery Wright, Tony Todd and Basil Wallace in a timely restaging of Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs*.

## Les Blancs rekindles racial controversies

### Les Blancs

A play by Lorraine Hansberry  
Directed by Harold Scott

By Pat Aufderheide

**T**HE FIRST COMPLETE VERSION OF Lorraine Hansberry's final play *Les Blancs* opened February 11 at the Arena Stage theater in Washington, D.C. By the next day's newspapers, the new production had renewed the controversy that swirled about the play when it opened in 1970. Then, the play that took its name as a tongue-in-cheek riposte to Jean Genet's *Les Negres*, and took as its theme African revolution, was alternately seen as the great black playwright's magnum opus and a didactic anti-white tract.

Hansberry was an exceptional American dramatist, for her ability to transcend the moralism that creates, on the one hand, sentimental melodrama, and on the other, preachy political messages. She could put racism, class and gender oppression at the center of her dramas without turning it into a personal indictment of the audience. Never judgmental, her perspective was grounded in an understanding that social contexts limit not only individuals' options but also their very sense of self.

Raised in Chicago as a middle-class kid in a ghetto, she early plunged into the political activity of postwar New York, championing civil rights and African independence. "One cannot live with sighted eyes and feeling heart and not know and react to the miseries which afflict this world," she later wrote in *Black Scholar*. Injustice touched and

troubled her as a human being; it fascinated her as a dramatist.

She was 28 when *Raisin in the Sun* opened to a barrage of awards and accolades, some of which irritated her. *Raisin*'s characters were consolingly human, many said, just like whites. Hansberry self-consciously constructed her art around the principle that the universal was carried within the particular, and it was a patronizing insult for the poor, proud, black Chicago family of *Raisin* to be read as "just like" anybody else. It was also prophetic evidence that people see what they are ready to see, not necessarily what's on stage.

**Africa and America:** By the very attempt to step out of traditional polarities and enemy-and-victim politics, Hansberry kept stepping into controversy. *Les Blancs*, her last work, shows that she wasn't afraid of it. The play presumes that a central drama of the 20th century is nations emerging from colonialism, under the shadow of racism. That focus testified to her conviction that "the ultimate destiny and aspirations of the African peoples and 20 million American Negroes are inextricably and magnificently bound up together forever."

Its title and eventual shape was triggered by Hansberry's reaction to *Les Negres*. As described in Lorraine Hansberry: *The Collected Last Plays* (Plume, 1983)—where *Les Blancs* among other plays is bulwarked by critical essays and memoirs—she termed Genet's play "a conversation between white men about themselves." And she imagined a play in which the "too easy purgation of the Whites—self-condemning and self-absolving—the untouched remote-

ness of the Blacks—would be nullified by a drama wherein we were all forced to confrontation and awareness."

The play she wrote to do that features Tshembe Matoseh, son of an African tribal leader, educated and now married with a son in London. When he returns home for his father's funeral he finds the colonial world upturned. Independence struggles have sharpened old antagonisms, and forced everyone into choices. Each of the characters in the village and the nearby mission exemplifies a position on the politicizing spectrum.

Tshembe slowly comprehends the demands that both sides—colonizer and colonized, both authentic parts of his childhood and past—put on him. And he moves toward the grim moment when violence is no longer negotiable, and the only question left is how to use it, not whether to avoid it.

**Talk as action:** The play is built around mostly-verbal confrontations between characters each limited in their vision and intense in their convictions. In the dialogues between white and black—especially between a visiting journalist and Tshembe—many less-visible barriers to dialogue are exposed along with clashing opinions. Those dialogues are enough to make a good liberal squirm in his or her seat; they often feature the subtle bullying of race discussions where whites set the terms.

When the journalist Morris asks Tshembe if he hates white men, Tshembe replies, "I do not 'hate' all white men—but I desperately wish that I did. It would make everything infinitely easier...I have seen too many raw-knuckled Frenchmen coming out of the Metro at dawn and too many hungry Italian children to believe that those who raided Africa for three centuries

ever 'loved' the white race either."

Tshembe declared racism a "device" and Morris, relieved, agrees: "Race hasn't a thing to do with it actually." Oh yes it does, says Tshembe: "I am simply saying that a device is a device, but that it also has consequences: once invented it takes on a life, a reality of its own...it is pointless to pretend that it doesn't exist—merely because it is a lie!"

By play's end, Morris and Tshembe have managed to battle their way to a conversation, despite Morris' terrier-like persistence and Tshembe's built-in resentment. By then, however, they've both become embroiled in a conflict far larger than their own.

*Les Blancs* has striking and deliberate parallels to *Hamlet*, not just in plot but also in its rhetorical levels and coherence. Hansberry strove for heightened realism rather than realism trapped in the mundane. She put language itself, elevated from casual habits of speech, on stage.

Like *Hamlet*, the play has tragedy, centered on the indecisiveness of Tshembe. But it has no sentimental heroes and villains. Even those objectively doing the greatest harm—the terrorism-haunted military officer, Tshembe's toadying and betraying brother Abioseh—have an intelligible logic to their perspective and acts.

**Focus on strength:** Hansberry was unable to finish the play before her death from cancer at 34. In spite of revisions by her husband and collaborator Howard Nemiroff, the second act bears evidence of partial completion. The play hiccups at the end, with a series of abrupt resolutions. What's not incomplete is the central formulation and the vigor of the debates that govern the drama.

The Arena Stage production honors the sophistication, vigor and compassion of Hansberry. Director Harold Scott (who also mounted the successful recent Kennedy Center run of *Raisin in the Sun*), with help from Nemiroff, brought the play's strong dramatic dialogues to the fore. The staging and set avoids flashy effects, keeping decoration, spectacle and stage business to a minimum without being pointedly spare. Those decisions put a heavy weight on the actors. Tony Todd as Tshembe sets a high standard, which is met by the rest of the cast as if it were effortless.

At a seminar held after the opening, South African poet Dennis Brutus said, "The play challenges the audience to an open mindedness, and I think requires as well that the viewer bring something to it." Brutus' comments were borne out by local reviews. In the little-read Washington Times, reviewer Hap Erstein praised the "electrify-

ing new production" of a play by an artist "who was just beginning to reach the peak of her dramatic powers." The mega-media boom was lowered by David Richards in the *Washington Post*, who called it "nearly three hours of undramatized rhetoric and argument, punctuated by occasional bursts of offstage action." The majority of the seminar audience, galvanized by a production that ambushes complacency, tossed out suggestions on how to overcome the *Post*'s powerful dampening influence on the production's future.

**Two camps:** The debate evoked the storm created around the 1970 production. John Simon in *New York* had called it "a malodorous, unenlightening mess," while Walter Kerr in the *New York Times* urged people to see a "mature work, ready to stand without apology alongside the completed work of our best craftsmen." The *Times*' critic Clayton Riley, who regularly covered black theater, explained intense audience reactions:

"The play divides people into sectors inhabited on the one hand by those who recognize clearly that a struggle exists in the world today that is about the liberation of oppressed peoples, a struggle to be supported at all costs," Riley wrote. "In the other camp live those who still accept as real the soothing mythology that oppression can be dealt with reasonably—particularly by Black people—if Blacks will just bear in mind the value of polite, calm and continuing use of the democratic process."

From reaction to *Les Blancs* today, the polarity Riley describes seems to be more entrenched than ever, with other dogmatic divisions that follow. If the play's denouement in violence seemed to take the *Post*'s reviewer by unpleasant surprise, its treatment of black-white relations piqued some of those raised upon a spirit of black nationalism.

This revival occurs in a high tide of open racism, at a peak moment of media conglomeration, at a low ebb for inspiring and empowering political leadership. It's unclear what will happen to *Les Blancs* at the end of the Arena run. What is clear is that the challenges it poses are at least as unnerving now as when it debuted.

The vision of Lorraine Hansberry is clear in this passionate drama—her unsentimental empathy and clear-eyed hope informing horrifying political reality. You would like to see the play Hansberry would write about this moment in America's stride across the world stage. The woman who wrote, "I care. I care about it all. It takes too much energy *not* to care," would have had something interesting, confrontational and magnanimous to say. ■

Joan Marcus



By Pat Aufderheide

THEATER



Sam Waterson and Robert Prosky in Lee Blessing's *A Walk in the Woods*.

# A Walk in the Woods runs on Broadway

## A Walk in the Woods

A play by Lee Blessing  
Directed by Des McAnuff

By Michael Phillips

**C**ALL HIM A COCKEYED OPTIMIST. Playwright Lee Blessing has just spent the bulk of a year refining a play about a Soviet and an American arms negotiator, and his primary impulse remains a simple one: "It's important to have hope."

The play is *A Walk in the Woods*, which opened Feb. 28 at Broadway's Booth Theatre after two previous—and highly successful—runs at Yale Repertory Theatre and San Diego's La Jolla Playhouse. Blessing's inspiration sprang from the 1982 arms-control talks between Paul Nitze and Yuli Kvitsinsky, wherein the pair reached a significant agreement in stockpile reductions, only to see their efforts shot down by their respective governments.

Blessing, 38, an amiably low-key resident of Minneapolis, took those negotiations as his point of departure. In *A Walk in the Woods* Nitze becomes earnest, Wisconsin-born John Honeyman, playing out the comedy-drama in counterpoint to the Soviet representative, the older, shrewder Andrey Botvinnik.

The Broadway production stars Robert Prosky (last seen on Broadway in *Glengarry Glen Ross*) as Botvinnik and Sam Waterson as Honeyman. Over the course of Blessing's four scenes—one for each season, as set against the foothills of the Jura

Mountains outside Geneva, Switzerland—the two wrangle over the nuclear threat, philosophy and their own personal crises of conviction, as they pursue an arms-reduction treaty.

**Award winner:** Under the direction of Des McAnuff, La Jolla artistic director, the play got strong reviews at Yale and ended up a 1987 Pulitzer finalist (tying with Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound* behind the winner, August Wilson's *Fences*). *A Walk in the Woods* was cited as the American Theatre Critics Association award for best new play.

The global nuclear climate has changed since the play got its first airing at the 1986 National Playwrights Conference at the O'Neill Theater Center. *Glastnost* hadn't yet

## The two characters wrangle over the nuclear threat and their own personal crises of conviction.

become an overused buzz word. Since then, Blessing has necessarily adjusted some lines and details. But it hasn't been much—a fact Blessing finds easy for art's sake, but less than encouraging politically.

"The changes," Blessing said by phone from the Booth Theatre, "have not had to be that extensive. After all, the INF treaty covers only three or four percent of all warheads.

If all goes as planned—if we ratify and nobody cheats—we will have gotten rid of about three-and-a-half percent of the warheads.

"One speech I added near the end of the play points out that these two countries have negotiated and/or signed some 13 treaties since the early 1960s. At that time, we had a few hundred warheads each. Now we have 50,000. So I think there's plenty of room for skepticism."

**A successful failure:** And in Blessing's hands, there's room for plenty of humor. *A Walk in the Woods* is a piece of entertainment first, though certainly the most "relevant" yet from Blessing, whose previous works tend toward domestic and family-oriented subjects. Quite intentionally the dominant character here is the Soviet negotiator, full of outward charm and inward weariness. Through the three major productions, all directed by La Jolla's McAnuff, Blessing has tried to balance the two characters in terms of dramatic weight and their ultimate realization of, in the words of Botvinnik, a "very great failure—but a successful one."

"I think the Russian got written a little quicker than the American did," Blessing says. "That's happened in other plays, where I've emphasized one character more because I got the play written that way. So the effort has been, through Yale and La Jolla and the Broadway process, to find those places where Honeyman hadn't spoken up for himself sufficiently."

Blessing's success thus far with *A Walk in the Woods* attests to both the value of the O'Neill-Yale pipeline (a route greatly assisting the career of August Wilson) as well as of the Playwrights' Center of Minneapolis, which gave Blessing and others a

Continued on following page

## It's Official!

If you were feeling guilty about watching *Entertainment Tonight* instead of serious public affairs, worry no more. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruled the show is a bona fide newscast, after *Entertainment Tonight* sought an exemption from equal opportunity rules for political candidates appearing on the program.

## It's Indecent!

If it's indecent, it shouldn't be on the air. Few disagree with that rule of thumb, which is now an FCC ruling. But many would like to know exactly what it means, as they try to make programming decisions. The FCC has refused to clarify its ruling, although it has said it won't apply the rule after midnight. *Rock & Roll Confidential* newsletter (Box 1073, Maywood NJ 07607, \$21/year) reports a recent incident that puts a new spin on indecency. An Allentown, Penn. disc jockey put together a raw version of "Mack the Knife," called "Mack the Truck," condemning in graphic terms Mack Truck's dismissal of hundreds of workers just before Christmas. The song was popular, but not with Allentown's mayor, who called it "disgusting, if not obscene"—not for the raw language but because it had attacked "one of the city's best corporate citizens." A Mack Truck spokesman somberly joined in, calling it un-civic.

## Media to Congress: Just Say No

During the recent vote on contra aid, legislators were under heavy media assault. This time, the weight of media investment was on the anti-contra side. Countdown '87, organized to oppose the aid, launched a \$120,000 advertising campaign to mobilize public opinion (compared to a mere \$10,000 invested by a pro-contra group). Taking videocassettes directly to legislators was filmmaker Allan Francovich (*On Company Business*). His latest, *Houses Full of Smoke*, a three-hour expose of U.S. intervention and right-wing terror in Central America, contains grim footage of contra raids and U.S. involvement in terror. The film, which opened to good festival reviews and is on the eve of release nationally, was respectfully received by legislators' aides, whose attention span is typically not too many seconds longer than their bosses'. Meanwhile Francovich, who says his life was endangered repeatedly in filming the often-shocking interviews, is through with political documentary for the moment. "I'm going to make comedies from now on," he says, "something like *Oliver North* meets the Marx Brothers."

## Censorship, U.S. Division

American independent filmmakers are free to make educational movies with a point of view. But according to the United States Information Agency (USIA), which certifies films for a crucial duty-free exemption, they're not free to market them internationally. In the Reagan era, the USIA, has tailored its interpretation of an international agreement to fit the administration's political cloth. It has refused to certify films "lacking adequate American points of reference" or that "advance a particular opinion"—such as films dealing with drugs in the U.S., the danger of uranium mining, and the war in Nicaragua. USIA responded to a court reprimand in a case brought by the Center for Constitutional Rights by finessing the rules to say much the same thing. In fact, it just labelled as propaganda *From the Ashes...Nicaragua*, Helena Solberg-Ladd's documentary featuring interviews with pro-Sandinista working people. The Center is now back in court, arguing that filmmakers have the right to export views of America that aren't "absolutely Ronald Reagan-rosy clean," as lawyer David Cole put it.

## Censorship, Overseas Division

The South African government, which surprisingly authorized Richard Attenborough's anti-apartheid *Cry Freedom* for release, has now threatened to prosecute three South African newspapers for running ads quoting banned persons—who just happen to be the main figures in the film: Donald Woods and Steve Biko. Universal not only won't water down the ads, it's decided to schedule South African screenings, to call the question. Meanwhile Bernardo Bertolucci's spectacular film *The Last Emperor* is suffering censorship woes. After the Japanese distributor peremptorily deleted scenes of the 1937 Nanking Massacre ("too shocking for Japanese audiences") Bertolucci hollered loud—and was supported by official outcries from China, where much of the movie was filmed—to get all but a few seconds back. Now the film is up for release in China, and the snippers are out there as well—not for politics, but for sex scenes.

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**Low-Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties**  
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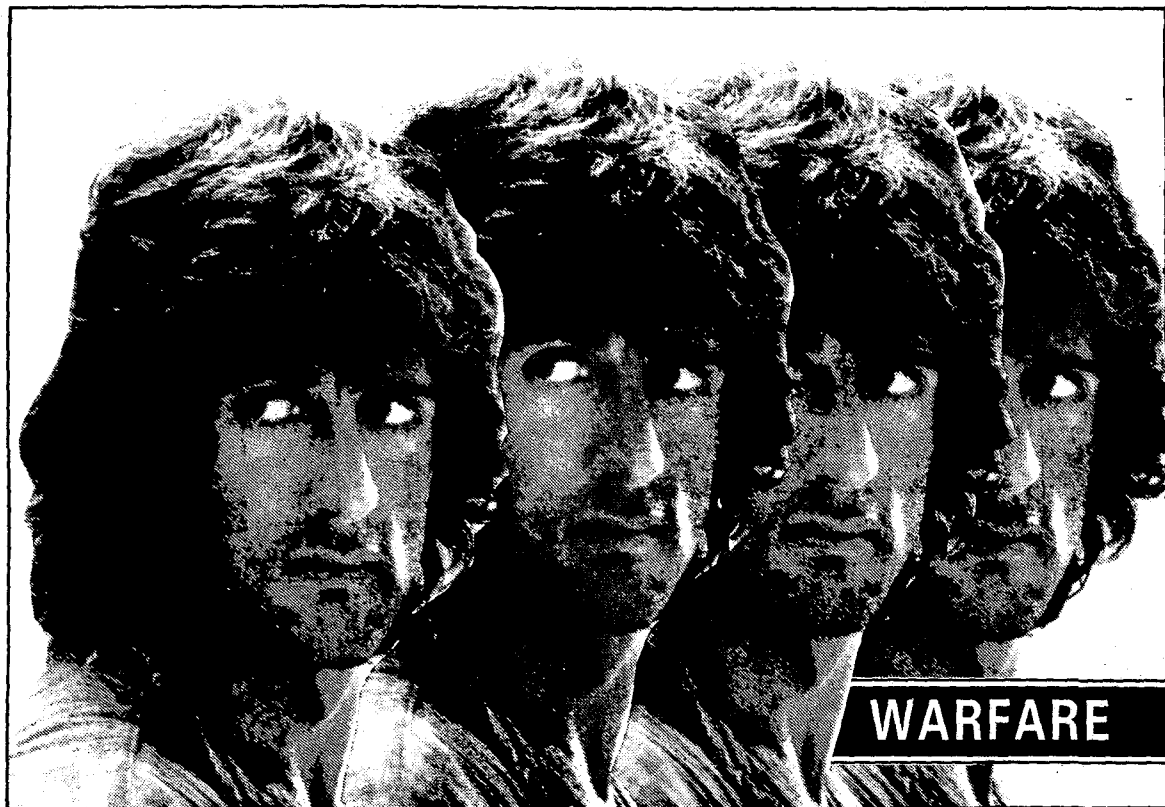
By Karl Bermann

**T**HE YEAR IS 1962. AN ARMY ROTC instructor lectures to a class of military academy cadets, this writer among them, on the newly created Special Forces. These "Green Berets," he says, will play a pivotal role in wiping out Viet Cong guerrillas in South Vietnam, the latest domino to totter before the Red Tide. He demonstrates how to garrote a VC with piano wire. The enemy will not be able to replace his cadres, who are now dropping like flies in our collective imagination: "we" are building an electronic "fence" to detect any movement of men or materiel from North Vietnam. The class is awestruck at such devilishly clever invincibility. Here, surely, is the wave of the future. It's counterinsurgency—where the medieval meets high tech at the fringes of John F. Kennedy's New Frontier.

Then comes the rude awakening. The protracted and agonizing defeat of cold war liberalism in Vietnam and massive public opposition to foreign military adventures. It is a period of tactical retreat for the watchdogs of the empire, the proponents of global force projection.

But now it's the '80s. To the throwback regime in Washington, the specter of the Red Menace looms larger than ever. The Reaganites see the bear's paw wherever some Third World nation thumbs its nose at Uncle Sam. But they will "stand tall," drawing the line in El Salvador and elsewhere, just as JFK's counterinsurgents sought to do. More than that, they will take the offensive and "roll back" the red stain spreading across their maps—in Afghanistan, Nicaragua, Angola, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Grenada. And they will strike back at communist-inspired terrorists and drug dealers wherever they threaten our interests.

**Third World arena:** Seeing the Third World, not Central Europe, as the primary arena of East-West confrontation today, Reagan regime military planners have pulled together the disparate age-old



## War: names have been changed to protect the guilty

strategies and tactics of unconventional warfare—with a few innovations—under what they tout as a unified and cohesive doctrine of "low-intensity conflict."

In the national security establishment's Orwellian bureaucratized term derives from the classification of armed conflicts in three tiers: high-intensity (World War III), medium-intensity (the Iran-Iraq war), and low-intensity—a catch-all for just about anything else, from the protracted contra war to stationing Marines in Lebanon in 1983 to the *Achille Lauro* incident. For the Reaganites, low-intensity warfare is not just the right stuff to meet the current challenge to the empire. With its emphasis on the use of surrogates and, when indicated, the rapid and overwhelming application of U.S. power, low-intensity warfare is also the prescription to cure the Vietnam syndrome.

A panel of experts scrutinizes the theory and practice of low-intensity conflict in a new book edited by Michael T. Klare and Peter Kornbluh,

*Low-Intensity Warfare: Counterinsurgency, Proinsurgency, and Antiterrorism in the Eighties.* Individual contributors review the Vietnam experience, the Reagan administration's "interventionist impulse," the nature of the low-intensity buildup, and the strategy's application to particular situations. An excellent chapter on Afghanistan by Selig S. Harrison sheds much light on a little-understood conflict. On the other hand, Walden Bello's contribution on the Philippines is unaccountably weak: he says little about the social grievances that underlie the New People's Army insurgency (or President Corazon Aquino's inability to address them). Likewise, he fails to point up the crucial differences with the failed Huk rebellion of the early '50s (the Huks never had a national base, which made defeating them relatively easy).

**Historical legacy:** In many respects low-intensity warfare is so much old wine in new bottles. Tracing U.S. experience in counterinsurgency would take us back to the

suppression of Shay's Rebellion in the 1780s. Thomas Jefferson conducted our first limited contingency force projection—"anti-terrorist" operation when he ordered a naval expedition against the Barbary pirates. And today's "peacekeeping" missions (usually a cover for more sinister motives) have their precursor in William McKinley's intervention in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion in 1900.

Not even proinsurgency is new. The U.S. backed anti-government rebels in Nicaragua in 1909-1910. The CIA supported pro-fascist insurgents in the Ukraine after World War II and also sponsored anti-

**In many respects, low-intensity warfare is so much old wine in new bottles. Tracing U.S. experience in counterinsurgency would take us back to the suppression of Shay's Rebellion.**

Chinese guerrillas operating from Burma in the 1950s (creating instead an opium ring). *Low-Intensity Warfare*, the book, recognizes this

lineage though it notes only a few of the antecedents in passing. In this respect, the full story remains to be told.

But the book succeeds in pointing up what is new and ominous: the Reaganites' preoccupation with low-intensity warfare and covert operations as a way to reassert and reestablish U.S. dominance. In pursuit of this objective they have expanded, upgraded, and systematized U.S. unconventional warfare capability to an unprecedented level, seeing it as a (if not *the*) key foreign policy instrument.

**Rambo's budget:** Pentagon spending on Rambo-esque "special operations" forces (Delta Force, SEAL teams, Rapid Deployment Forces, Light Infantry Divisions) and their attendant hardware has sextupled since 1981—making it the fastest growing component of the war budget—to a current annual \$2.5 billion. That figure doesn't include the billions spent each year on CIA covert operations (which have tripled under Reagan).

And much of the combat in low-intensity warfare is non-military, with billions more going for psychological operations and the foreign "aid" aimed at winning the hearts and minds of target populations. U.S. "economic" support for El Salvador alone has cost nearly \$2 billion since 1980, three-fourths of it directly related to the war. As Peter Kornbluh notes, U.S. military maneuvers in Honduras probably constitute the largest and most expensive psychological warfare operation in our history. Surveying the low-intensity military buildup, Stephen D. Goose concludes, "The most basic questions of what interests these forces are supposed to protect, and how they are to protect them, have not been adequately answered."

Richard Barnett warns in his summary essay that "reconciling national security with the requirements of democracy now poses the greatest challenge to the idea of popular government since the nation was founded"—if anything, an understatement in the era of the Iran-contra affair. Klare and Kornbluh's *Low-Intensity Warfare* is a good place to start arming for what needs to be a high-intensity debate.

Karl Bermann is a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.

## Walk

Continued from preceding page  
 creative leg up early on. Right now, concurrent with the development of *A Walk in the Woods*, Blessing has begun work on two other scripts. One, *Cobb*, concerns Ty Cobb, baseball's "Georgia Peach"; another, now under the working title of *A Quality of Tears*, concerns the kidnapping of an American in Beirut. The latter is scheduled to premiere

this summer at La Jolla.

**Power of reason:** *A Quality of Tears* sounds like another step toward political relevance for its maker, but Blessing's mission remains anything but explicitly political. "It's simply a hard issue to deal with emotionally," he says. "And I'm looking for ways to deal with it. That's what really got me into writing *A Walk in the Woods* as well."

It's that larger issue of the political human element—often im-

itated, seldom mined effectively on stage—which continues to engage Blessing the dramatist. Cynics might call him a victim of Pollyanna-itis, but he genuinely believes in the power of reason in the face of global nuclear destruction, no matter what the statistics show.

"At the same time we're talking about this or that treaty," he says, "we're working as hard as we can on SDI, on all of the new generation of technological breakthroughs in

weaponry. That's not slowing down...both countries always run on both tracks. They work very hard at building weapons; they work very hard at controlling them. And they're much better at building them because human beings have been doing that for thousands and thousands of years, and they haven't had to control them until 1945."

The comparatively puny gamble of Broadway aside, the mass appeal

of *A Walk in the Woods* has already been tested in pre-New York airings, and its easily mounted, two-character requirements should lead to a healthy post-Broadway afterlife. If it has a neat, easily summed-up message, according to its author, it is simply about "the importance of hope. I also think, however, it's important to be educated, to find ways to think about all this."

Michael Phillips is the theater critic for the *Dallas Times Herald*.



By David Volpendesta

# Veteran writer Heinemann bringing the war back home

**A**N HOUR AFTER CHICAGO WRITER Larry Heinemann, winner of the 1987 National Book Award in fiction for his novel *Paco's Story*, arrived in his San Francisco hotel room he was laughing, almost uncontrollably, on the phone. "In These Times," he intoned in a voice that intimated familiarity with the Chicago-based weekly, "I have to come from Chicago to San Francisco to be interviewed by *In These Times*?"

The next night, just prior to his appearance at the Bay Area's most prestigious literary venue, Black Oak Books, Heinemann was still savoring the irony. Devoid of literary pretense and affectation, Heinemann exudes a down-to-earth, no-nonsense aura. In fact, he's so modest about his success as a writer, it has to be dragged out of him that in addition to receiving the National Book Award, *Paco's Story* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) was also given the Carl Sandburg Medal (Chicago's premiere literary award), the Fiction Prize from the Society of Midland Authors, the Chicago Fiction Award by the Friends of Literature, and was also one of the recipients of an award from the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Despite his calm exterior, Heinemann began to speak intensely about his experiences as an Army grunt when the subject of Vietnam came up. "I went overseas in March of 1967 and came back in March of 1968," he said. "My MOS (military occupation specialty) was 11-Delta. I was an armored intelligence specialist. I was in recon. A hundred years ago I would have been in the horse cavalry. I would have been the poor jerk with the funny hat who would ride out in front of the battalion to find the Indians."

**Being there:** Heinemann paused for a long second before he continued: "I was drafted in '66 and submitted to conscription with what could only be called a soul-deadening dread. I was 23 and somewhat older than everyone else...everybody else was 18...I knew the war was fucked before I went over, that there was no reason for it. And being over there certainly didn't change my mind. As a matter of fact, when I came back in '68 I was radicalized. I was just plain radicalized."

Unlike some others who were radicalized by the Vietnam war and have subsequently found careers prostrating themselves before the icons of neo-conservatism, Heinemann hasn't been screaming *mea culpa* for his political insights. In his acceptance speech at the National Book Awards banquet, Heinemann made a point of emphasizing exactly where he stood in relationship to the current historical revisionism of Vietnam and the war being conducted by the Reagan administration in Central America.

As he puffed slowly on a cigar, he recalled the last remarks he made in that speech. "There's just one



Award-winning author Larry Heinemann at home in Chicago.

more thing I want to say. Somehow there's a notion going around that we could have won the war. I don't know where this came from because I don't know any grunt who thinks that way. To say that we could have won the war is to say that we didn't hate them enough. Or we didn't strafe or bomb them enough. We didn't turn enough of their women into whores. Or we didn't zip enough hootches. Or we didn't bomb them far enough back into the Stone Age...If we allow the same thing to happen in Central America it will be the shame of our lives..."

"Then I sat down and Richard Rhodes, who was given the National Book Award for non-fiction, got up and gave quite a lengthy lecture on nuclear weapons. It was quite something. There was a very political cast to the whole evening which I don't apologize for at all. Those kinds of cultural decisions are crucial."

**Street-wise sensibility:** Just as crucial for Heinemann is the translation of words into action. In that spirit he and his wife Edie (to whom he's been married for 20 years and with whom he has two children) are

active members of Neighbor to Neighbor, a nationwide, grass-roots group involved in lobbying Congress and the administration to stop contra aid. Given his working-class background (both he and his father were drivers for the Chicago Transit Authority) and the fact that he both lives in a working-class neighborhood and identifies himself as a working-class writer, Heinemann feels comfortable organizing on the street.

Heinemann's street-wise sensibility also informs his blowtorch prose. His novel *Paco's Story* essentially traces the return odyssey of Paco Sullivan, the sole surviving member of Alpha Company. Heinemann masterfully captures the power, rhythms, and nuances of the spoken American language with such precision and lack of literary self-consciousness that it invites favorable comparison with another brilliant Chicago writer, playwright David Mamet.

Unlike Mamet, however, the musicality of Heinemann's language is more akin to blues than jazz.

**Paco's blues:** In *Paco's Story*, no

one is having a good time. Narrated by ghosts who are deceased members of Paco's company, the novel plunges into the phantoms of Vietnam that haunt Paco's mind while graphically describing his alienation and intense physical pain. Able to walk only with the aid of a black

## VIETNAM

hickory cane, Paco's body is a mosaic of scars. Nevertheless, he survives with an inspiring sense of dignity, which is all the more poignant as he becomes a symbol of those grunts who endured the horrors of Vietnam only to return home to another labyrinth of nightmares.

In the book Heinemann's currently writing, which focuses on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) among Vietnam veterans, Heinemann is still dealing with those nightmares. Mentioning that he's been working on the book since 1984 when he went out to the Olympic Peninsula on an assignment for *Harper's Magazine*, he described it as an extended essay that he hopes to complete this spring.

"To me," he commented, "this book is the final story. *Close Quarters* (Heinemann's first novel) is a war story. It really deals with what happened overseas. *Paco's Story* has much more to do with the reverberations since the war...The book about delayed stress is mainly about healing and how Vietnam veterans (I suppose anyone who has lived through that type of ghastly trauma) have come out of that..."

According to Heinemann, about 900,000 of the 2.5 million Vietnam veterans suffer enough from PTSD to require some type of treatment. Among Vietnam veterans, PTSD is

**In *Paco's Story*, winner of the National Book Award, Vietnam Veteran Larry Heinemann masterfully captures the power, rhythms and nuances of spoken American English.**

as urgent a topic of discussion as is Agent Orange, and it affects more people. Explaining that all the veterans he knew were now either approaching or had passed middle age, Heinemann commented that the main themes of the book are

now Vietnam veterans see themselves as men, husbands, fathers, and a generation of soldiers.

**General disregard:** The book begins with the 1986 Veterans parade in Chicago, which occurred on Father's Day weekend, and examines it as a celebration while exploring the contradictions inherent in that notion, one of which was the presence of the Parade Marshall, General William Westmoreland.

"When I heard that General Westmoreland was going to be the Parade Marshall," Heinemann said, "I was dead-set against having anything to do with it because I felt, and I feel now (probably even more strongly than before) that General Westmoreland is responsible to a large extent for the conduct of the war...I wouldn't get in line behind him if he was only going to a shithouse. I wasn't going to march in that fucking parade. I wasn't going to pass by the reviewing stand and salute that cocksucker. He gave the orders that dropped Agent Orange, dioxin. He's the guy who welcomed *Bob Hope*, this jerk. He's the guy who just loved every minute of it. He's the guy who killed friends of mine."

Nevertheless, Heinemann was persuaded to go see the parade and is grateful that he did. "People like to call it a healing thing," he said. "I don't know about that. I do know it was the first time, except for the parade in New York and the parade at the Memorial in 1982, that veterans got to see themselves as a group. And it was the first time in that way that we got to share any kind of fellowship. And I mean fellowship with a small 'f.' It was a real demonstration of brotherhood."

Although he describes himself as a slow writer who works on only one book at a time, he's already decided that when he finishes the book on PTSD he'll write another novel. "I prefer fiction to non-fiction...I'm a much better b.s. artist than a researcher," he laughed. "It's easier to imagine imagery than it is to get imagery from other people...When I finish the book on delayed stress, I'm going to start on my Chicago novel. I have a title already. It's called *Cooler by the Lake*."

Smiling, Heinemann explained that the novel's title is taken from a phrase commonly used by Chicago meteorologists in the summer, and the tone of his voice assumed the same ironic delight I'd heard on the phone the night before. "It's cooler as in *hip*," he laughed. "Cooler as in the temperature is cooler. But also cooler as in *cooler of beer down on the beach*. And it's going to be about Chicago working people and some of the characters who live in my neck of the woods."

**David Volpendesta** is co-editor of the forthcoming *City Lights* collection of Central American short stories, *Clamor of Innocence*.



# Olympics

Continued from page 24

We're IBM—monopoly that's all heart.

MUSIC: "Ain't No Mountain High Enough"

Mom: What's the matter, Billy?

Billy: Oh Mom, I don't feel like going for the gold today. It's my... my...

Mom: I know, Billy. No one can dig deep inside themselves and do their best when hemorrhoids flare up. Here, use Preparation H, proud sponsors of the U.S. Olympics.

LATER...

Billy: Gee, Mom, you were right. When it comes to Preparation H, there "ain't no mountain high enough."

Bob: And we're back. All the eyes of the entire world are on Dan Jansen, who's come back

to try again in men's speed skating. Dan is skating as Jane wanted him to. And there's his family in the stands, cheering him on. And they're off. He's doing great! Look at him go! This is fabulous—an American might win something. Can he do it? Oh no, Oh no! He fell again.

Bill: What torture for the Jansen family. Here's a close-up shot of his family's reaction when he fell. Here's a close-up of his sister crying. And here's a close-up of Dan's face to see how he's taking it.

Bob: The next skaters are about to take off, Bill.

Bill: But they're from Japan—let's keep these cameras on Dan's face here. Can we see a replay of his family's reaction in slow motion? Kinda looks like Christa McAuliffe's parents during the Challenger crash, doesn't it? Hey, can we get that footage and run it

next to this?

Bob: And here's Dr. Joyce Brothers to analyze what the Jansen family must be going through.

Dr. Brothers: Bob, this will be a time of deep grief and mourning for the Jansen family, and, indeed, for the entire nation. But then the healing process will begin. I would urge schools to hire therapists to help our nation's schoolchildren work through their own grief about the Jansens.

Bob: Thank you, Dr. Brothers. And we'll be right back.

MUSIC: "My Girl"

Sally: Mom, I've got my qualifying meet today and, well, I'm a little nervous about, you know...

Mom: I know, honey. If you want to feel confident enough to excel, you need the extra edge. You need Massengill douche.

Sally: Oh Mom, you're great.

Mom: You can trust Massengill, the official douche of the U.S. Olympics.

Bill: And now, let's get up close and personal with ski champ Peter Mueller.

Bob: Here's Peter off the slopes. He's studying English because he knows it's the best language in the whole world. And here he is in the kitchen, cooking! He sure looks out of place here, doesn't he—a big, strong athlete in the kitchen? Well, Bill, he marches to a different drummer. But he sure can ski.

Bill: You know, Bob, we've been covering a lot of ice hockey, but we are covering other sports, too. We're covering everything here. So, for right now, let's go to...ice hockey.

Bob: Well, bad news, Bill, the U.S. lost again. What's your take on this, Mr. Abrams?

Abrams: They make you so mad, just like little boys do when they're bad. They're so naughty, you just want to pull their pants down and spank them on their little bottoms.

Bob: And we'll be right back.

MUSIC: "You've Got a Friend"

Janitor: Say, boss, you going to watch the Olympics?

Joe: Yeah, Mac, I'm on my way to The Fern Bar to watch The Game with The Guys on the giant video screen.

Janitor: Gee, boss, sounds great. I've gotta stay here and scrub the Executive Urinals and, well, I hope I can hear The Game on this sputtering, beat up old transistor.

LATER, in The Fern Bar

Joe: You know, guys, I just had a Bud, and it made me realize how deeply I wanted to eradicate class differences and work to promote social justice. I'm taking a six pack and a portable TV back to the office, to Mac, my brother, my comrade.

Janitor: Gee, boss it's great the way the Olympics and Bud bring us together as a nation.

Bob: And now, to men's figure skating and the two Brians, the American Brian and the other one.

Bill: And our Brian is putting on a great show. Look at him! Look at those scores! We finally won something! How do you feel, Brian?

Brian: Pant..gasp..Well, Bill..pant..gasp.. I..I..pant..feel great.

Bill: And you won this for all Americans, didn't you? You did it for us, right? I love the way these athletes, at least the Americans, are so selfless.

Bob: Me too, Bill. And now for a final recap from Frank and Twinkie Lee Gifford.

Frank: So, Twinkie Lee, what's the message of all this?

Twinkie Lee: Oh Frankie, weren't the two Brians cute? All us girls at the salon had our eyes glued to the TV. But to get to your question, I think our coverage has been totally awesome. There's just no TV like American TV. And the message is, of course, that win or lose, America is the most generous country in the whole wide world and our corporations are so selfless. And all Americans, in their everyday lives, dig deep, go for the gold, give it their best shot and run their hearts out for their fellow man and their country.

Frank: And now to the closing ceremony, "We Are The World" sung by the Blind and Crippled Children's Choir of America as conducted by Lee Iacocca.

Bob: And that's our coverage. God bless us each and every one. Night night.

Susan Douglas teaches media studies at Hampshire College.

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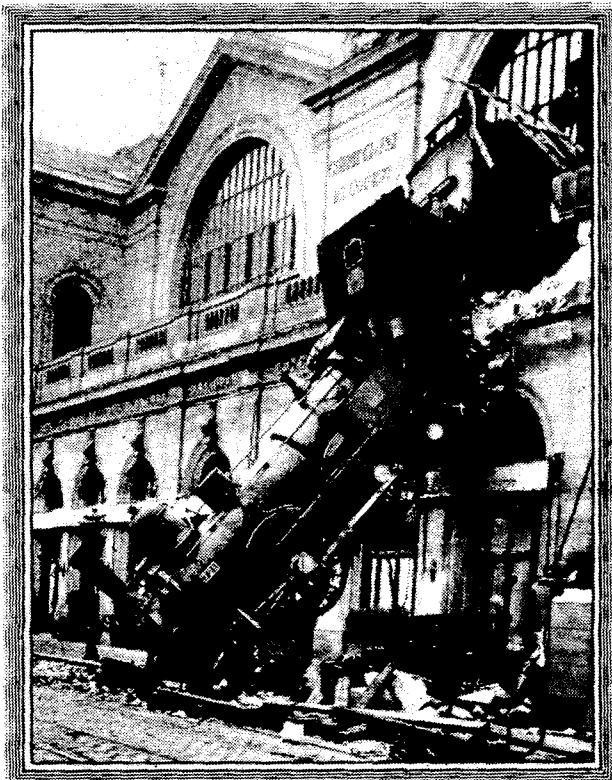
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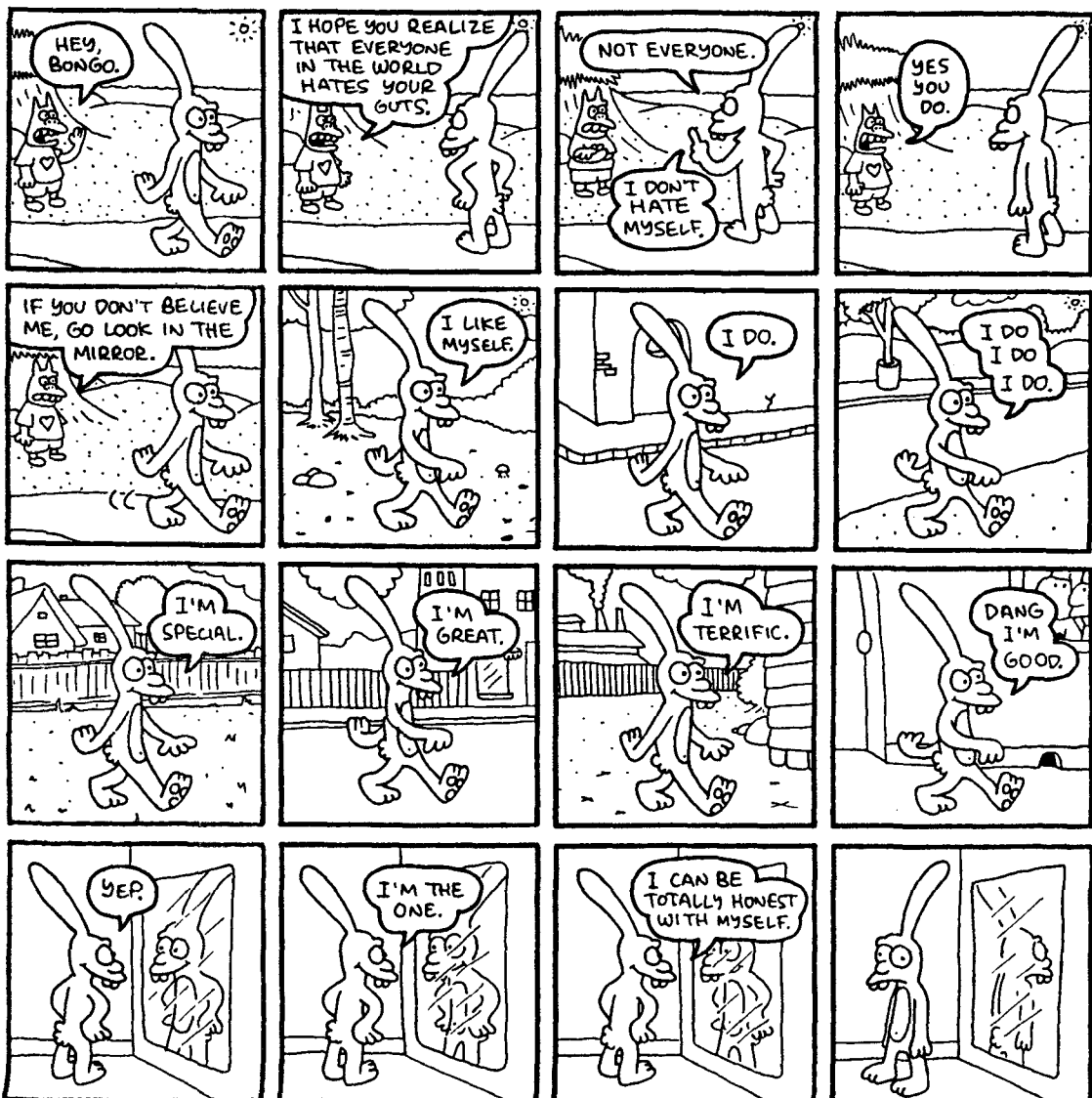
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## C A L E N D A R

Use the Calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of ITT Calendar.

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

March 11

Focus on Zaire: A Conference on Zaire's role in U.S./South African/Israeli reactionary policies in Southern/Central Africa; human rights abuses under Mobutu; U.S. legislation pending, denying Mobutu further aid, and call for international support. Speakers: Collette Braekman, Belgian reporter; William Minter, author on Africa; Serge Mukendi, Workers and Peasants Party,

Congo; Prof. Nzongola Ntalaja, Center for Research on Zaire; Ann Seidman, Africa scholar; John Stockwell, Assoc. for Responsible Dissent. At 11 Dupont Circle, 8th floor conference center, 9 a.m.-6 p.m., \$15. Student \$5. Call for information (212) 864-3000 (NY), (202) 543-8324 (DC).

### TAKOMA PARK, MD.

March 18

"Making the News Fit", a video documentary on the media with commentary by Michael Parenti, author of "Inventing Reality: the Politics of the Mass Media" and by Rob Richi, media representative for the Christic Institute, Friday, March 18, 8:00 p.m. at the Takoma Park Municipal Center, corner of Philadelphia and Maple, Takoma Park, Md. Sponsored by Maryland Alliance with Central America. Free.

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By Susan J. Douglas

I KNOW SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN BUSY WORKING (1) late at night, or off doing research for consumer activist groups on the relative merits of competing malted beverages, so you weren't able to catch all of the thrilling coverage of the Olympics. Lucky for you, I took extensive notes and can recap the highlights so you won't feel left out. Here's a nearly verbatim transcript.

Bill: Say, Bob, let's go to the luge competition.  
Bob: Hey, Bill, no American has a chance of even placing in that; let's go to speed skating.  
Bill: Oh, and what a day it was. Young Dan Jansen, so tough and determined, and yet so overwhelmed by the early morning death of his sister. That's one of the truly great things about TV in this great land of ours, Bob, the way one young man's personal torment and anguish can be turned into entertainment for billions of viewers around the world. And we'll be right back after this message.

MUSIC: "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother"  
Young woman: Gee, Dad, it sure is good to come home and see you again.  
Dad: It's great to see you too, Alice. You know, honey, I don't know how to tell you this, but your mom and I, well, we may lose the farm.  
Young woman: Oh Dad, don't you worry, I work for Dow, and our agricultural research means that no one will ever be hungry again, and you'll always have the farm. Dow means always being able to say I Love You.  
Dad: Oh honey, you're the greatest—and so is Dow.

Bill: Say, Bob, let's go to figure skating.  
Bob: And here come those youngsters from East Germany. A nice crisp start too; too bad they didn't get the applause the Americans did. Uh oh—oops! She fell on that double helix back flip. Well, we can stop watching their performance, Bill, they haven't got a prayer. Oh, and look at her, too—on the verge of tears. Can we get a camera in on that?

Bill: Here's the instant replay of the fall, and in slow motion, too, so you can see her limbs flying around and watch her bounce excruciatingly on the ice.

Bob: And now we have the fourth-ranked pair from the Soviet Union. What do you think, Peggy?

Peggy: Oh, I don't think their music has a good beat. The Russians always pick such icky music. The audience is practically asleep. And we'll be back after these messages.

MUSIC: "You're Having My Baby"  
Voice-over: Three years ago Scott had a heart attack.

Scott: Push, honey. Push. I said PUSH. HARDER!

Voice-over: Then he started taking Bayer Aspirin.

Scott: Would you show a little exertion here and PUSH? I haven't got all day.

Voice-over: He started living again, loving again.

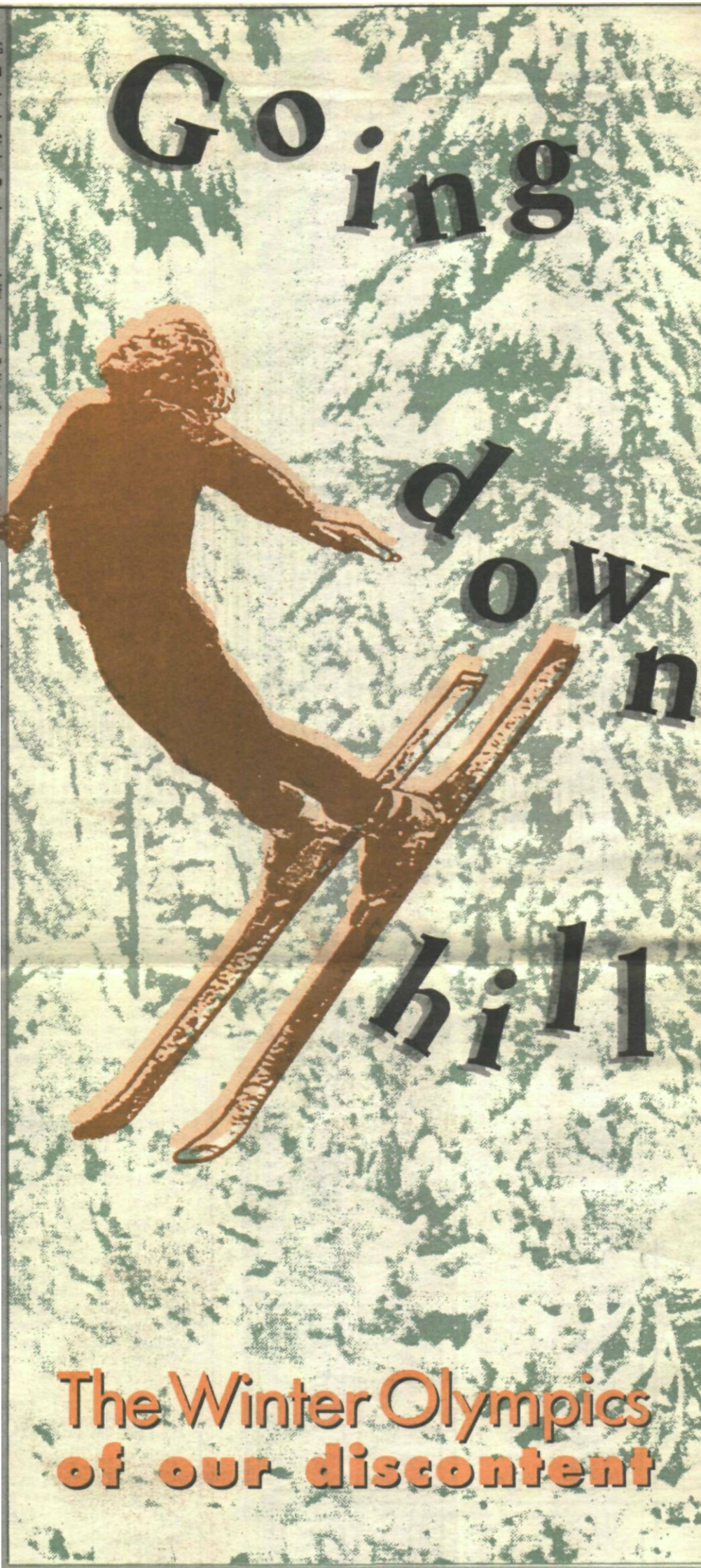
Scott: Jesus Christ, stop sweating and moaning so much and push. I'm losing my patience here. You're keeping me from my board meeting.

Voice-over: Yes, once Scott had a heart attack. Today he had a son.

Scott: Well, finally, it's over. That sure put me through the mill. Thank you Bayer. Bayer means new life.

MUSIC: "Ave Maria"

Voice-over: First it was Gandhi. Then it was



Biko. And now, coming this summer from Richard Attenborough, the motion picture event of the year. Joan Collins is Mother Teresa. You'll cry. You'll sob. You'll weep. And you'll feel good about being a human being.

Bill: And we're back. Finally, we get to see some Americans. You know, training for the Olympics is awfully stressful—let's see how these kids handle it. Let's meet Gillian Wachsmann and Todd Waggoner up close and personal.

MUSIC: Up Where We Belong

Todd: The pressure gets so heavy some times. That's when I get in my plane and go flying. Just to soar—to dance in the sky. A good day of flying really helps my skating—and then I have some milk and cookies. I recommend this stress reducer for everyone.  
Bill: These American kids are great, aren't they Bob? What role models.  
Bob: You bet, Bill. And now, the Soviet team of Gordeeva and Grinkov. You know, she's not like those beefy, hairy-faced types the Russkies usually send over. Why just look at her. She's so petite and cute, cute as a little button. She's still a little girl, and with

that adorable pout on her face, she looks just like an American.

Bob: And that music has a good beat! But she didn't fall down on those throw jumps, so we don't have any replay tape. So, we'll be back after this message.

MUSIC: "America (Oh Beautiful, for Spacious Skies)" sung by Lionel Richie  
Vladimir: I used to be hockey player for Iron Curtain country. But in my country, everyone greedy and stingy. Everyone treat me bad. And no microwaves. So I come to best country on Earth and right away get job with best company on Earth, Dow. Now I am American. And Dow lets me do generous, great things for whole world. Dow means love and liberation for everyone.

MUSIC: "Theme from Ben-Hur", aerial shot of Saddle Dome.

Bob: And now, what everyone's been waiting for, the ice hockey. Let's get up close and personal with some of those brave U.S. hockey heroes.

Bill: Here's Nick, an astrophysics major at Arizona State. Say, Nick, when you played these guys in 1980, weren't you thinking the whole time about how they invaded Afghanistan and how Soviet imperialism was swallowing up the free world?

Nick: Well, uh, Bill, I, uh...

Bill: And tonight, out here, won't the entire U.S. team be playing not just for our great nation and its people, but for all the freedom fighters of the world bravely resisting Soviet aggression?

Nick: Yeah, well, you know, Bill, really...

Bill: And now, to our special commentators for tonight, Donald Trump and Elliott Abrams.

Bob: Say, Don, what do you think of this rink, having built one of your own?

Don: Well, Bob, it's not as good as we Americans can do in an unlettered free enterprise system, a system that encourages excellence and truly benefits everyone. But it's not bad for Canadians.

Bob: And Mr. Abrams, how do you rate the significance of tonight's Soviet-U.S. face-off?

Abrams: The U.S. must penetrate fast, move quickly behind Soviet lines, get on top quickly and stay on top, and continue thrusting and thrusting again and again and harder and deeper and faster and yes and again and yes and harder and yes, oh yes, until complete conquest is achieved.

Bob: And hear that crowd chanting for their heroes: U.S.A., U.S.A. Isn't that great? Can we get a 360-degree camera pan of that great crowd? Look at all those flags.

Abrams: I think the Soviets are limp right now. I think they'll shoot themselves in the foot.

Bill: You know, we can't show you viewers all the events because we can only be in one place at a time. So we can't show you the women's cross country, the women's luge or women's skiing, right now.

Bob: Boy, what a hockey game! Look! Great! A scuffle between an American hockey hero and a Red. What a game! And we'll be right back.

MUSIC: "Lean on Me"

Voice-over: This is Patty. She's deaf and has a speech impediment. She's going blind and is paralyzed from the waist down. But Patty is happy. Because IBM has dedicated all its energy and research to people like Patty. And now we've given her special equipment. Now, thanks to IBM, the blind can see, the deaf hear, the crippled walk, the mute speak.

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